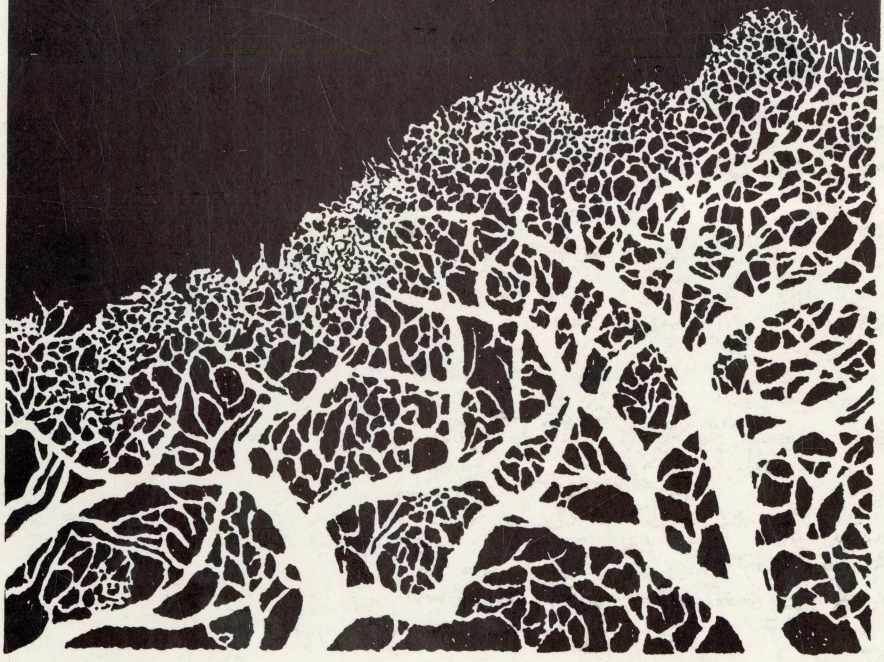
the Tower



1979

the Tower

Spring 1979, Vol. 47

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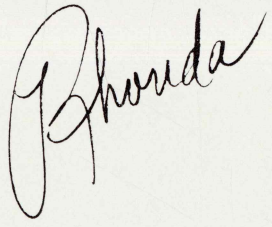
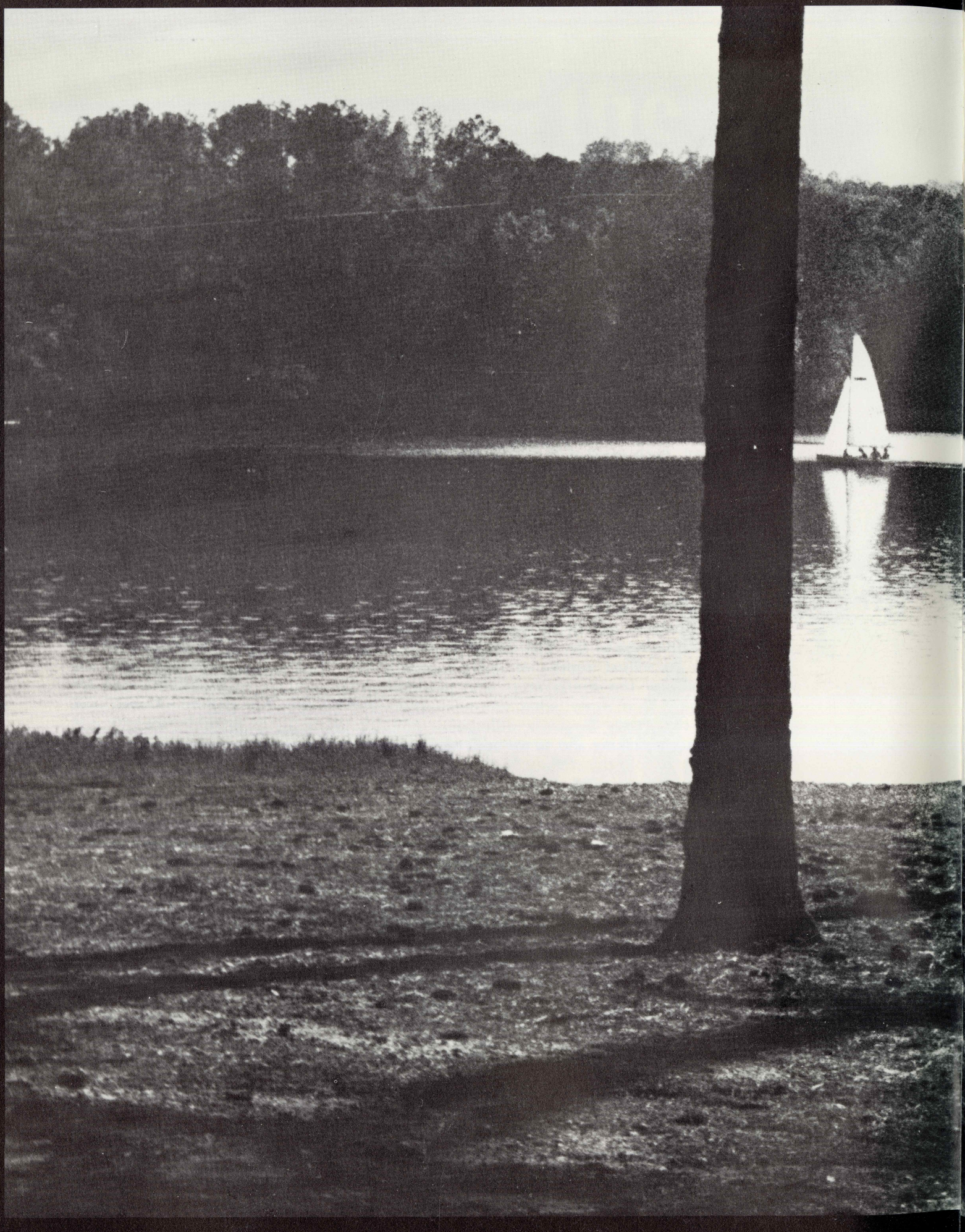
"All of us are both creatures and creators, but we vary both in our quality as a creation and in our power to create. Great original thoughts or ideas are those which are not only new to the person who thinks them, but new to almost everyone. These rare contributions are creative in perhaps a stronger sense of the term; they are not only the results of a creative act, but they themselves in turn create new conditions of human existence. The theory of relativity was such a creative act; so was the invention of the wheel. Both resulted in new forms of power, and human life was changed thereby."

—*Copied*

Note from the Editor

The above quote concerning creativity is a very accurate one; our creativeness can be as powerful as we allow our minds and our imaginations to be. This magazine entails that very power from the individual depths of many students. With this in mind, I thank all the contributors who participated in the book, and I believe it is, truly, what you have made it. I am grateful, also, to the judges for their willingness, honesty and hard work in decision making and to my staff for their helpfulness and support. And to you, the student body, I hope *the Tower* 1979 will prove to be a memorable one in which we can all see a part of ourselves and take pride in what we behold.





Denise Beavers

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Parable

Dobb's Creek, North Carolina
August 10, 1778

It was our first encounter.

We huddled in the undergrowth of shadowed, green woods and stared across a rank clearing where the enemy clustered and moved out from the entangled trees onto the weed-grown earth. We tensed in the morning heat. Muskets were clutched. Sweat dripped from faces and arms. In the foliage, insects droned and jar flies sizzled out in the open. The heat swelled; we waited in the red morning for the ambush.

We breathed heat-dense air. They neared. Weapons were siezed tighter and pressed against shoulders. We took aim. I fixed my sights on the brown forms. They moved closer. The woods tightened nervously. I could make out their faces frowning in the sun-heat. Closer. I saw insects stabbing at their eyes, out in front.

The underbrush exploded with musket and rifle smoke. I fired. In the clearing, they bolted and crumpled and floundered into the woods. I primed, rammed a charge down my barrel, cocked, aimed, and fired into the turmoil. Musket blasts shattered into the clearing again. A few figures straggled across the field and into the scrub. From the forest, thick air stirred and settled over the violence. The smoke-riot calmed.

Soldiers emerged from the brush and moved into the grass. Death-straining bodies were lanced with bayonets and slashed with blades; gasping faces were slammed with musket butts. It was over.

I looked out under the sun, where blood gushed from brains and bowels, and dead bladders emptied on blood-wet trousers. My stomach swelled with shock and I vomited. I crouched over and dumped my fear and weaknesses onto the undergrowth until I was dry and my body heaved, and I wanted to reach all the way down and smother everything inside me.

Reginald Haygood

"unfolding as it should"

Mysteries exist
Mysteries persist
fear them not — they are part of Nature.

Have you asked meaningful questions?
You find only what you seek.
Would you know if you had an answer?
The trust is within your reach.

Void crossed
Stars gained
Body lost
Mind remains

Sense
feel
know

Believe
perceive
BEHOLD:

Whole is there, all for us
No questions remain —
Realization of the One and Three
Now
completely gained.

Charles A. Flanagan

She is a sheet of white paper,
as fragile and vacant as
the eyes of a newborn baby.
If someone were to fold her
into an airplane, she would fly.
Instead, she lays open to
the words she hopes will be written.
Yes, she has known words,
but their penciled meanings
faded or were erased —
and each erasure left
the paper thinner.
She waits.
She is not waiting for
the final erasure
that will leave the paper torn,
although she feels it
will happen anyway.
She waits for the black-ink words
that will not trickle when
hit by a stray raindrop.
She wants to become
the first perfect poem.

Marie Godwin

You seem to pass in and out of my life
as a dream passing through the lazy, helpless
and mute minds of the sleeping.
Not able to call you, or touch you
but only feel your shadow come and go,
I am blind,
never knowing how long you stood on the outskirts of my mind,
never sure if your passing through was intentional,
or only a way from one side to the other.
Your to and fro is syncopated — my heart jumps uneasy
with your rhythm.

Your wind sweeps through me, reminscent of something good,
while any realism eludes me as I chase it . . .
for perhaps I chase nothing.
Like clouds, dark and heavy,
facts roll across my mind, leaving me dim
and frustrated, groping;
Losing sight of you, I close my door
as if in apathy to the coming rain
though I sit by the window
to await the inevitably ensuing rainbow.

Somewhere inside me, as you wander
there is a quiver of longing and expectation;
but being too nebulous to share,
yet too near to ignore,
I am afraid public disclosure could solve you
or prove your nonexistence
whereby a corner of me would fold, wither, and die —
So I am content simply to wait
for an apocalypse.

Denise A. Ezell

Warning

Never turn your back on a person
with a pen; she may know you.

It is a well known fact
that a poet wears her
emotions on her shirt sleeve
and has no private life.

A poet cannot be trusted.
She will kiss and tell
and publish her love letters.

A pen has no emotions.
It will slander you after
signing your birthday card.

Never fall in love with
a poet unless she has
run out of ink.

Marie Godwin

Cindy Shirley

Fog

The dark blanket of dense moisture rested near the surface of the ground, extending upward beyond the tops of the crested mountains. The huge volume had formed like clouds over a steaming kettle. Silhouetted against the early morning sun, the massive enemy of the early morning traveler loomed as a defying barricade. The huge crystals knitted and knotted as a tight gauntlet moved sluggishly back and forth, over and over, announcing ominous signals. Colors of the windswept valley were obscured by the heaving gray monster.

Forming in the early morning hours, the size and texture of the thriving droplets cascaded over the grassy carpet with a shivering, ghostly effect. The atmosphere sent forth odors of wild berries and flowering shrubs, causing a contagious feeling for the advent of spring.

As the searching sun climbed slowly and methodically to the zenith, the large gray droplets danced more freely. The slight breeze added to the tempo of the dance steps. The torch continued its orbit, and a burst of calmness and casualness emerged. The process was blinding and exhilarating as the barrricade of haziness disappeared in the same methodical manner in which it had appeared. Forms, once hidden by the ghostly gray avalanche, emerged with a startling brilliance and freshness. Having been cleansed, an aroma of fragrance spread its tentacles throughout the valley. The earth welcomed the transforming experience and showed its pleasure through happy travelers arriving safely at their destination.

Keela Dennis

2-21-78

Do not worry.
When I come, I will come . . . and
I believe I am coming now.
Quiet and listen . . .

To contemplate that which is innermost,
To grope blindly in the darkness,
Echoes and whispers tap my shoulder,
Causing me to turn and stare into
emptiness;
And marvel at the depth of my soul.

Kevin Aldridge

Joker of Life

You deceived me
With your clown face,
All painted with a smile,
And I befriended you,
Innocent as a child.

You hurt me,
And your mask
Fell from your face.
Where I once was blind,
I could now clearly see
The lies and deceit
Written in your eyes.

You laugh
At my sad expressions.
You say
The show is not over.
Yet, for me,
The curtain has fallen.
I'll no longer
Be your Audience.
You — Joker of Life.

Tonja Esteppe'

First Spring Day

I envy the freedom of the sun
and you
who know not of cloistered rooms
and books
that demand religious discipline

the mustiness of winter
reeks
in the rain-cleansed air
and I sit
pale
afraid of the soothing warmth
the growing green
that leaves me
homesick for morning
lovesick for afternoon

the children play
with a satanic laughter
rising through my open windows
to my deafened ears
that insist on hearing
and I remain
embittered with the sun
and you
who tempt me to do
the sacrilegious duties
of a sinner
in need of sinning.

Isabella Scavetta

I'd Like To . . .

I'd like to write a song
of dreams you never knew,
Then charm their dusty melodies
and sing them all to you.

I'd like to paint a dream world
of fantasy and light
To hold us there on canvas,
and still time from its flight.

I'd like to plant a garden
and grow there all is fair,
And sing my songs and give you things
that only I can share.

Denise Mitchell

Geranium Word-Song

Brought to grips with this question
By a sin-red geranium in a Luzianne can,
I have no answer beyond
The long lights on the water
Fading downstream into the stars.

The moon yawns by
And the past winks out,
A falling star, already history.

An eon of memory
Shatters like dead mirrors
Dashed against the rocks of time.

Words paint your portrait, slowly
Make the abstract sing
And I wander barefoot,
Lost inside a dream of you,
Again.

Bill Miller

Convergence

Blank-white light bulbs glared while a droning, rhythmic, engulfing roar of machines poured through the wide, dingy cell of the newspaper circulation department. Mr. Dungue moved like an awkward, ink-grimed machine inside ink-grimed clothes. Pointlessly and clumsily stabbing advertisement sheets into the loosely folded papers — stacking, spilling . . . the roar slowed, then melted like a record dying on a turntable; the machines groaned to a stop. Final newspapers flopped out of mechanical bowels like dead fish. Mr. Dungue moved languidly with the last of a stack and slapped it on a gray conveyor belt with a monotony of other heaps passing toward a cluster of gray workers blubbering words among themselves with sluggish laughter.

"I hate this garbage," thought Dungue. "I'm through it for another filthy day. Oh God, I don't belong with this garbage." Fumbling with his gray-plastered sleeves, he trudged through the slate-colored room under blaring lights into a dim hall and a closed, gray concrete cell of stairs.

The upper office was bustling impassively as Mr. Dungue hesitated and stepped inside.

"I wanted to ask again about a job up here," he broke into the actions of woman behind a desk.

She jerked slightly, "Oh, yes . . . well, I . . . well, we're really wrapped up in everything right now. Uh, maybe if you could be here another day, maybe someone could . . ."

"I work downstairs."

"With us?"

"Circulation."

"Yes, well . . . maybe . . . . That man with the glasses . . . uh, talk to him."

"Sir, my name is Dungue; I work in circulation and I was just wondering if maybe you had some sort of opening in this department. Like, uh . . . photography or, you know, writing something . . ."

"What? Oh, a job . . . well, I . . . . No. Right now we've got students working and I'm afraid, really more than we need. But, uh . . . Doug, if you'll give us your last name and address . . . well, they might take you downstairs somewhere — circulation."

"I work downstairs in circulation here, and Dungue is my last . . . ."

"Oh, here already. Yes, well . . . . But no. We have to take people trained in this sort of work, you know, like journalism or . . . unless you have some experience in this . . . ."

"Well, no. But I've seen a lot of really crude things wrong in this world, and I'd like to show it and make rainbows out of all the bad so that . . . ."

"Well Doug, I'm afraid we really can't use you, but, uh . . . thanks."

Mr. Dungue lumbered down the gray stairs. Outside, a winter sky dumped gray down on the concrete world. "They think I'm garbage. They hate me like I was garbage. His stomach boiled gray as he trudged over the gray sidewalk, wedged against huddled brick walls. "I hate all this garbage in the world. The whole world is garbage. Nobody knows how much garbage there is because they don't see it puked out of those filthy machines. I hate this garbage . . . ." Violence gushed into his brain — a swelling discord, pushing him down the sidewalk as he stared down at the gray concrete. "I hate it. I hate it . . . ." Pushing . . . until his foot slopped into a red-brown puddle of sludge on the cement. He jolted. A cluster of battered and piled garbage cans blocked the sidewalk, spilling over into a multi-colored mass of acrid refuse.

"Oh God! Oh God — damn you God, why did you bring me here? I hate garbage! I hate it! I hate . . ." He twisted his body, convulsing to escape the conglomeration of wastes and stumbled back, scraping his smudged shoe on the street.

A rushing, blundering garbage truck slammed its brakes and the tires screamed to a clashing, rumbling halt . . . too late. Mr. Dungue splattered against the pavement like ruptured tomatoes and crushed dogfood.

They cleaned him off of the street like garbage.

Reginald Haygood

Daydream

Reach out —
It's raining
Tears from nature's eyes.
Stand up —
The sun hides,
Placed in the corner for time.
Dream on —
It's gone again,
The highrise penthouse.
Go home —
It's back to being alone —
The beauty of a priceless escape.

Susan White

Revealing Affirmation

Perfect order function
Precision structure impressed
  Harmonious Interdependence
    Whirling meticulously for eons and eons

Snowflakes of designs exquisite and each unique —
  Bountiful patterned God thought as it were.
Rainbows, refracted beauty glistening,
  shimmering of universal vibrations complete

Conscious awareness
  for to strive to know of
    Nature
      Expressed surrounding
      flowing inside you
        lifting gently

Learn from Her carefully
  Approach with humility and loving eyes
She is as a sign extraordinary
    giving
      to seekers of Truth
    Absolute Affirmation
        of MEANING.

Charles A. Flanagan

Circular depth — *Ted Sandlin*

Somniloquy

The mystery is somehow sweet
Children are drinking moon-beam tea
And smiling

Celtic warriors emerge from the glade —
We watch from a Rover on a highway in Scotland.

The Beatles sing, "She loves you" as
We listen,
A young couple from Liverpool and me.
A hitch hiker from Nirvana and his unsuspecting hosts.

I got on a bus and sat next to a guy who'd just
Kissed his girl good-bye. I don't know if they ever saw each other again.
Early Sunday morning
I left my sweat shirt on a milk truck bound for Colchester.

The milk man was a kind chap who told me of a
German girl who spoke no English.
Said he, "All I can say in German is 'Heil Hitler.'"
I understand that they understood each other somehow.

Just today I lost my mind in a dry-heat sauna.
Flashing pictures of candied-apples and blondes from Birmingham tell me . . .

The mystery is somehow sweet —
Children are drinking moon-beam tea
And smiling.

Dave Richardson

Dandelions and Things

I've designated
the solitary dandelion
at the edge of the lawn
as yours

take care of it

don't pluck its petals
in reciting some silly
school-girl's rhyme
or decapitate it
in some preconceived notion
of acceptable suburban lawns

the world has lost
its colour scheme
no longer sees the beauty
of yellow on green

give it back to us
come June
when the dandelions
quietly determined
bloom.

Isabella Scavetta

Sometimes
I look at you
and see the distance
of light-years.
In your face
the space of them
divides us;
and as we shoot apart
like meteors
I wonder if we'll ever
curve or bend
to touch again.

Is it that we cringe to be explored?
Is it that we know we cannot win
fleeing in a dark
which never hides us?

How long does it take to meet again?
How long does it take the
curving line
to cross itself
and make itself

complete?

Mary Anderson

A Rising Young Genius or

How To Be A Jackass In Ten Easy Lessons

[Political Anthem]

Hollow men with hollow lives
got ugly jobs and ugly wives
nodoze days and sleepeze nights
hazy ways and too bright lights
9-5 with your nose to the wheel
well tell me guy how does it feel
you've got the ideal home
and the perfect wife
in your car there's a phone
and your picture's in life.

So tell me fellow is that all you can say
you open your mouth and all you do is bray
the microphone is on
give us the word
you can't be wrong
C'mon
"Uh well ..... no comment."

R. Scott Farris

Years

We could come out and say
my twenty-five
and your thirty-three
add up to fifty-eight
making us too old for games
but instead
we find the difference
of eight
and calculate everything
from there
until all we share
is a common interest
in subtraction

we could compromise
divide by two
until each of us
had only half the difference
to share
but I suppose
our love was not made
for the arithmetic
of school books
any more than we were made
for the simple sum of one.

Isabella Scavetta

Nightime ritual —
we stand at arm's length.
My hand smooths over
the rough edges of your face;
my fingertips burn
on the blue flames of your eyes.
I am drawn by your
sapphire radiance,
but I am stopped by
the hand that once held me.

Marie Godwin

An Excerpt from the Correspondence of A. Pebble Esq.

[Circa 1979, with apologies to William Blake]

Oh Love that wounds me,
I looked up as I crossed the street
And I saw you for the first time.
I was blinded by your radiant beauty and struck
By a car, which sped away, as I lay bleeding at your feet.

Whispered words of love
To oblivion are consigned.
Your cynical laughter leaves me tortured by the passion
Coursing through me unconfined.

So put your chain-mail on
My dear. We'll go for a stroll, then stop for a beer.
And I'll show you the little wooden box that an old lover gave me.
In it, I keep what was once a human finger. It is cold, brown,
And shriveled. Once it was pink. And warm.

It's all yours.

With deepest regards,
A. Pebble

David Richardsor

An Enduring Moment

It was that confusing time of day between light and dark ---- dusk. The end of a rainy day was being ushered out by splotches of fog and a gray, uneasy haze. The setting was just right to turn windows into mirrors. Candace stared at her reflection in the window. The odd colors of her face caused by the fluorescent light over the ktichen sink made her look almost ghostly. And she remembered, when she used to play in the backyard, the good feeling it gave her to look up and see her mother standing in this window. Tears came quickly. The pain was still fresh though it had been three months since that rainy, cold December day when her dad came home from the hospital and told her that Mother had died.

"Leukemia," the doctor said, "nothing we can do but wait . . . and pray . . . ."

"Oh, God! I prayed, but it did no good," Candace said quietly through clenched teeth. She noticed the pale yellow priscilla curtains her mother had kept so crisp and clean, but now they were dingy with clinging dust. She looked on the window sill and saw the plants. The browning African violets, the wilting Swedish ivy. These were not the only living things lacking attention. Her father had begun taking longer and longer feeding the cattle and horses. She tried to imagine him alone in the barn on a bale of hay. Sitting . . . remembering . . . crying.

The sound of her father stomping mud and barnyard remnants from his boots at the back walkway brought her wandering mind back to the kitchen. Back to the cheery role she played for her father's sake. Although he had not been a receptive audience since she assumed this role — since the death, she continued to look at the cue cards and act on. Maybe she was afraid of what he would be like if she were her true self. Maybe she was afraid of what she would be like. Anyway, the curtain began rising as her father opened the back door.

"Hi, Dad!"

"Hey, Candy."

Words. No feelings. She had grown to expect this, but not to accept it.

Supper was eaten without words. Candace cleaned up the dishes. Then she walked to the living room to see what her father was doing. There he was leaning back in the recliner asleep and snoring. The newspaper lay open in his lap. Candace thought aloud, "That's how he gets by. He works hard and long until he's so exhausted that he has to fall asleep when he sits down."

The urge to talk with her father was ever present tonight as it had been all the other quiet, lonely evenings. Seeing that there was no chance of talk tonight, she walked back to her bedroom, but instead of going in she walked on down the hall to the bedroom her parents had shared.

She stood in the doorway leaning against the facing until her eyes adjusted to the dim light that came down the hall from the living room. Everything was as her mother had left it. The baby pictures on the dresser, the make-up mirror and tray on the vanity. Each thing was in its place, and in the corner of the room was her father's loaded 410 shot-gun. Candace stared at the gun for the longest before she walked over and picked it up. She put it down and turned to leave the room. Then she went back, quickly picked up the gun and walked hurriedly to her room as if done any slower the act would not have been possible. Candace placed the gun behind her door and walked to her desk just as quickly.

Many times in these past few weeks the thought had entered her mind, but she had never gone quite so far as to actually touch the gun. The scraping of wood on wood as she pulled out the desk drawer broke the deadly stillness of the house. She waited for a moment to listen for her father. Getting a sheet of loose-leaf paper and a pen, she began writing a note to her father. After a third try she finally wrote what she thought she wanted to say:

Daddy,
I couldn't bear the pain
of watching you slowly
withdraw and die too.

A few tears dropped down onto the paper and made the ink run on a few of the words, but the note was still readable so she left it as it was. She kept crying. Remembering the agony of her mom's death — that empty, unfilling void — she thought to herself, "It's strange. Seems that the more I cry, the less pain I would feel." Still crying, she changed into her jersey for bed and set her alarm clock for 5:00. Then she put the clock under her pillow so the alarm would not wake her dad.

The next morning came rather slowly, or so it seemed to Candace who had just fallen asleep when the alarm went off. She turned back over to get just a few more minutes of sleep, but then she realized why she had set the alarm so early. She got out of bed and pulled on Levis, a sweatshirt and her tennis shoes. Picking up the note from her desk and the gun from behind the door, she walked quietly to the kitchen. There she left the note on the table and walked out the back door. The cold morning air was a shock to her face. The door seemed to squeak louder this morning as she pushed it to. She walked through her backyard to the pasture gate and lifted the latch of the heavy metal gate and walked through. The screaming sound of the metal was so loud that she decided to leave the gate open for fear of waking her dad.

It was just light enough to see as she walked toward the hill in the pasture where she used to go sit and think, just to get away. Within a few minutes she was

Spider-web

Michael Barnes

The invariable mark of wisdom is to see the miraculous in the common.

-- *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Self-portrait *Noel Spicer*

Tower Photography Award

While,
China moves forward
Vietnam comes back . . . [to mind]
And Israel's always been there
And Carter says we won't fight,
except for the oil,

Iran rises again
to a new dictatorship
Prices rise again
Along with the suicide rates,
to an all time high,

Women are irritated
And the draft's reinstated
And we give 26 billion to help support
the national terrorist group
Up at the Pentagon.

Appalachian children die
Along with the wildlife
And the morals of the land
But we can feel better by doing something,
like Disco's and Bars,

I'm thankful for the peace from God, knowing
there's a purpose in it all.
Although He and I still have discussions about
the validity of my "needing" to know
That the sponcoel cavity is lined with choanocytes
or that Louis XIV was gay
in order to obtain a slip of paper with a good G.P.A.

H. Michael Barnes

The Plowman

The two men, tired from the morning's labor, had moved into the shade. Earnest was squatting at the base of the water oak, his head bowed like a beast of burden, his unseen load weighing heavily on his broad shoulders with his downcast eyes seeing only the ground beneath him. He smelled like earth and stale tobacco, and there lingered about his rude clothing the faintly detectable odor of Octagon soap. He spoke only when prodded and then only half lifted his haunting eyes to mutter an awkward response. He appeared to be bred of peasant stock; his body, long and sinewy, showed evidence of animal strength. He rolled two cigarettes and placed one into his shirt pocket. The other he lit and began to smoke, his head still lowered.

"Papa." The expected call grated through the air from the tenant house to the edge of the owner's field where landowner and renter rested.

"I 'spect your dinner's waitin', Earnest. You better go on in. Come back when you're finished and we'll prob'bly be able to get that last little bit done before evenin'. I don't reckon I really know how you feel, son, but if ever you set your mind to do something about your wife, I'd be glad to drive you to the doctor and help you tell him just how she's been acting."

Earnest managed a "much obliged" to his boss, lifted himself from his hunched position and walked to the house for lunch. He stopped on the porch for a minute to loosen the laces of his boots, pulling his hot, tired feet from the confines of the leather. He shook the loose soil from his wrinkled, damp socks and sighed deeply as he started to move inside.

The whine of the closing screen door followed him as he moved across the worn linoleum path to the kitchen. As he passed the bedroom door he lifted his eyes to glance at the sleeping child, fitfully turning in her crib. He continued toward the water table in the kitchen, lifted a half-full bucket and poured its contents into the white, chipped-enamel pan. He splashed the cool liquid on his face, reached for the soiled, soured towel and mopped the clinging beads of moistness from the stubble of his beard.

The boys had already eaten and had begun to scuffle at the table. Hilda, too, must have eaten for she was sitting in the rocker by the fireplace, seeming to stare at the ashes, long cold and undisturbed since spring, with bits of trash thrown in on top of them. A row of hairpins held back the woman's stringy, greying locks. Her unshaved legs were crossed at the knee, with one foot swinging in perpetual motion like a speeded-up pendulum ticking off time.

Earnest pulled his chair to the table, filled his plate with the cold peas, some onion and cornbread, and tried to fill his hungry body.

The baby's cry, an unceasing painful squall, interrupted his purposeful eating. Earnest looked toward the woman he called his; her leg continued to swing in unbroken rhythm. He moved quickly toward the baby and found her helpless body reflecting its lack of attention. She still wore the diaper he had pinned on her after breakfast; it dripped with the wetness of many soakings. He unfastened the pins to reveal a horrible redness, the tender skin beginning to blister and bleed from the continued ammonia exposure.

He reached for a dry diaper but there were none; he went to the kitchen for water and found only the bucket he had emptied. Picking it up by the bail he returned to the bedroom and lifted the fragile nude body into his clumsy arms. Taking the baby with him to the well he cranked the windlass, carefully managing the precious burden with his other arm.

Once again they returned to the bedroom where he stripped the wet sheet from her crib and replaced it with a worn, soft quilt. He ripped a long strip from a dry portion of the sheet and tore from the strip one smaller piece. With this he bathed the tender body; he patted her dry then liberally coated the raw sores with petroleum jelly. He folded the larger strip of fabric into a square, diapered her and placed her tenderly into her crib.

He gathered the stinking bundle of wet diapers from the corner of the room and went to the back porch where he lifted a large galvanized tub from its hook on the wall. He piled the diapers inside and made several more trips to the well for water. Earnest lathered the diapers with the brown bar soap, rinsed them free of the residue and spread them on the grass to dry.

He tiptoed into the bedroom and found the baby sleeping again, more restfully this time. He glanced toward the clock; he wouldn't have time to complete the meal.

He began to pull on his boots, his mind trying to fathom the why of it all. Hilda had mothered the boys but she had seemed unable to even nurse the baby girl. He had seen her on occasion lift the baby rather mechanically but she had never held it close. He knew something was wrong but he did not know what to do about it.

As Earnest tightened the laces on his boots he felt an unfamiliar moistness gathering around his eyes. He wiped his nose with his shirt sleeve, then, as if harnessed, he moved toward the waiting fields.

Glenda B. Weathers

Tower Prose Award

Self-portrait

Robert Rosas

12/5/76

In a fitful daze,
Did I leap high.
Above the flaming brink,
And sail
High above the waves.
I left the shore,
And flew,
Above the ocean of eternity,
And sank;
Deep into timelessness.
And space lost its existence
As I was borne home,
Once more on burning wings.

K. Aldridge

Predator with Nice Brown Eyes

I feel like an animal
a beast of prey
a part of everyone's life
that lurks below the surface
they don't know
what goes on inside my head.

I mingle and meander
like all the rest
and study their ways
a thousand funny habits.

I am one of them
I love and hate
and laugh and lie
just like all the rest.

Yet I feel somehow different
a hunting animal
a hunted animal
a haunted man
a beast of prey

Yesterday I was told I had
"nice brown eyes"
kind of funny isn't it?
A predator
with nice brown eyes.

R. Scott Farris

GQ Don't Like My Shabby Crycoat

You're back again,
Slummin' through my heart
And my head could use a new paint job, you say,
And my life needs a more fashionable trim,
And some new-car ideas,
And a shot of the good-life,
And my shoes are too smelly for me to meet your mother,
And you keep SCREAMING about what your money could do for me,
And we could make beautiful music together
But you get to write the lyrics,
And you're stickin' up "Keep Off, Mine" signs around my feelings,
And the gleam in your eye whispers "Fences,"
And you wonder why I don't write hallmark-card poetry for you?

Bill Miller

The student returns to his apartment, relieved but somehow saddened to be through with classes for the day. He is glad that his roommate is not there. Now that there is no one there to see him, he feels that he does not have to smile. He seats himself on the couch in the dimly lit den. It somehow seems appropriate that there are no windows in the den of his seventy-five dollar-a-month apartment. He lights up a thinly rolled joint and takes a long draw from it. He begins to look through the box filled with old family photographs that he has just recently gotten back from his sister. He looks at the pictures of his miner father and tenant-farmer grandfather. He sure has come a long way, he thinks to himself, but he feels he has lost something very important along the way. He is not sure what it is. His mind is filled with uncertainty about everything it seems. Next year he gets his degree — what then? All his life he has had one overriding ambition — to get a degree. But now that degree seems so unimportant. He takes another draw off of his joint. He wishes he could just quit everything and go back to Texas, but he knows he doesn't have enough courage to take such a big step. He takes another draw off of his joint. Why is he smoking this stuff? He doesn't even like it anymore. He feels that he no longer knows any of the answers. Suddenly he hears his door opening. He reaches deep into his soul and pulls out the smile that outsiders seem to think fits him so well.

"Well, if it ain't ol' Carol and Mary Beth. How ya'll doing?" he says in a jovial, exaggerated country accent. "Ya'll come on in and have a toke off this here Latin Lettuce. And ya'll make yourselves right at home."

Anonymous

Bathroom Drama

While in the bath tub I looked down
And was so shocked at what I found
That I felt suicidal.

I thought of a girl so slender and fair
That her languid, long, legs would make any man stare.
She wore her love like under wear.

"Pardon me sir," she said in my thought
"But you appear to be distraught."
Then she walked out on me.

"What a strange incarnation," I thought with a lear,
Then pulled the plug and when the bubbles were clear,
I happily found there was nothing to fear.

Or was there?

David Richardson

Words

Words are visual thoughts,
Or memories of what we've been taught.
They're elusive as gold,
Both timid and bold,
These things, they cannot be bought.

Words are the cure for confusion,
But we suffer from mental diffusion.
They will always be there.
So if we should dare,
They'll let us, if we want to use them.

David Phillips

Reflection *Denise Beavers*

News

I've gathered it up
in a coffee cup
discarded it
with the tea leaves
left it
on the floor
of the bird cage

I wasn't made
for the fine print
of death
for the headlines
of terror
anymore than
I was made
for yesterday's weather
that remained
indifferent
to my need
for sunshine.

Isabella Scavetta

In the woods we return to reason and faith.
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Tina Headley

College Night is the tradition on the University of Montevallo campus that makes students pray silently, cry aloud, and work extremely hard. This year it was a Gold Victory. As a tribute to College Night, especially to the Gold Production, and to all the people that made it happen, we thought a big part of it would be well worth the keeping.

Imagination

A Parable of Faith

CHARACTERS

Narrator
LeeFong
Jay
Puppets - 4
  Winter
  Spring
  Summer
  Fall
Shipyard Executive
Sailor #1
Sailor #2
Male #1
Female #1
Female #2
Doctor
Lady
Townspeople

SONGS

All Scenes	"Narrator's Song"	Narrator
Scene I	"I'm a Bum" "The Emperor's Song" "Lady"	Jay LeeFong LeeFong & Jay
Scene II	"We're All the Same"	Townspeople, Jay Male #1, Female #1, & Female #2
Scene III	"Imagination"	LeeFong, Jay & Puppets
Scene IV	"The Shipyard"	Executive, Jay & LeeFong
Scene V	"We're the Seasons"	Puppets
Scene VI	Reprise of "Lady" Final reprise of "Imagination"	Jay Entire Cast

Scene I (New Orleans shipyard)

Music begins. Lights rise on the house right organ chamber where we see a traditional Kibuki narrator. The narrator is masked and sitting in a frozen position. On cue from the music, the narrator comes to life and begins a song that will continue throughout the play.

Song: (*Narrator*)
Look to a time not so long ago
In fact to the start of this very show
Where an old man dreamed his dreams
And shared with a friend his noble schemes.

The scene opens on a port where we see a ship in dock. Suddenly the sound of a ship's horn is heard.

LeeFong: (*Appearing from boat and running to Puppet #1's position*)
The ship, the ship! Wake up!

Winter: (*Appearing from his position*) Who could sleep with all this noise!

LeeFong: (*Begins gathering his nets*) You know today the day! He come, he here!

Winter: I try to forget . . . (*horn blows, puppet winches*) but something keeps reminding me.

Begin pantomime. Horn blows again. Winter disappears. LeeFong begins throwing nets on the boat. He has the last net in his arms when suddenly from offstage left runs a young man in bum's clothing (Jay) with two sailors chasing him. As the young man runs by LeeFong, he accidentally hits his right arm knocking the net free. It falls over the two sailors. As the men recover, Jay runs into the cabin on the boat. The men follow, but as soon as they disappear after him, Jay comes back out the door. The men begin to fight in the cabin. LeeFong hides Jay in a bin not knowing that it is a pepper bin. Jay cannot stay inside and comes out sneezing. LeeFong covers Jay's mouth and hides him elsewhere. LeeFong runs offstage left and (begin stage business) as the two men come out of the cabin.

The two sailors are similar to Laurel & Hardy or Abbott & Costello. They come out of the cabin with the younger man (Sailor #2 — a huge, dumb character) holding his boss (Sailor #1 — a small, high-strung character) in a hammerlock. Sailor #1 frees himself and begins looking for Jay. Sailor #2 is right behind him. As Sailor #1 looks into the pepper bin, Sailor #2 bumps into him knocking Sailor #1 into the bin. Sailor #1 sneezes violently as he pushes Sailor #2 down onto a barrel. Sailor #1 sneezes again and Jay who cannot hold back any longer sneezes after him. Sailor #1 attempts to wash his face in a water barrel, but is too short to reach the water. Sailor #2 gets down on all fours so Sailor #1 can climb on his back. Sailor #1 sneezes again. Suddenly Jay sneezes and bursts out of hiding running offstage right. Sailor #2 stands dumping Sailor #1 into the water barrel. (Blackout)

As the lights come up, LeeFong is again throwing his nets on the boat. Jay backs slowly out of hiding.

LeeFong: Hello! (*Jay turns to fight*) Whoa! I help you get away, remember?

Jay: Sorry, too much excitement for one day.

LeeFong: Glad to know you, uh . . .

Jay: Oh, my name is Jay.

LeeFong: Jay what?

Jay: Just Jay!

LeeFong: Tell me, Just Jay, what you doing on their ship?

Jay: Sailing.

LeeFong: I not stupid! Why?

Jay: Isn't that the way all bums travel?

LeeFong: (*As an English gentleman*) Well, I couldn't quote the "Bum's Guide to Travel," but most would hop a freight.

Jay: (*Haughtily*) Well, I'm no ordinary bum.

LeeFong: Where you travel to?

Jay: (*Pauses*) Nowhere!

LeeFong: That north of here. You stowaway on ship sailing south.

Jay: What I meant was . . .

Song: **"I'm a Bum"**
(*Jay*)

I'm a bum, I'm nobody's son
I'm a lazy, good-for-nothing little
Son-of-a-gun.
I'm a bum, and as you can clearly see,
I'm the best little bum that I'd ever want to be.
I love adventure
I love the open road
I can't see myself with money
Or a permanent abode.
I've heard the fugues of ol' Beethoven
And the symphonies of Bach.
I've read the books of Keats and Coleridge
Poems by Hemmingway and Locke.
Yes, I'm versed in all these matters
And my repertoire's in stock . . . still
I'm a bum, I'm as happy as can be
For there's still so much in this huge world
That I have yet to see.

LeeFong: So you like everybody else, go no place fast.

Jay: Right! I mean wrong! I know where I'm going . . . I just don't know where it is!

LeeFong: (*Putting on chef's hat*) Sit, Columbus, and eat.

Jay: What is it?

LeeFong: Fish stew, you like?

Jay: I'm sure it's better than what I've had — nothing!

LeeFong: Diet of nothing go good with destination of nowhere.

Jay looks away as orchestra plays a distorted melody sounding like a teasing children's song. He is obviously disgusted with the taste.

Jay: Well, I'd uh . . . better be running along now. See ya later (much later).

LeeFong: Wait! You no like my stew?

Jay: Uh . . . I wasn't hungry.

LeeFong: I not understand. You say . . .

Jay: I know what I said, but . . . I gotta go.

Jay exits leaving his knapsack. LeeFong moves to Puppet #2's position.

LeeFong: Well, what now?

Spring: (*Puppet #2*) (*Appearing from his position*) Maybe we should hire a receptionist.

Summer: (*Puppet #3*) (*Appears with a turban on his head*) Have no fear. He will return.

LeeFong: Just how you know that?

Summer: I was sleeping (*cue for mysterious music*) when suddenly telepathic thought waves began to invade my consciousness. Then through metaphysical extrasensory perception, I established contact.

LeeFong: (*Excitedly*) And that how you know he return? (*Stop music*)

Fall: (*Puppet #4*) (*Appearing from his position*) No! Jay left his knapsack.

LeeFong: That no way to get him back.

Enter shipyard executive.

Exec: Anybody home?

LeeFong: (*In song and dance bit*) If I knew you were coming I'd a baked a cake . . .

Exec: That's not funny. If you knew why I'm here, you wouldn't be so friendly.

LeeFong: You ever taste my cake?

Exec: No.

LeeFong: Then you no say I being friendly.

All four puppets laugh.

LeeFong: (*Turning to puppets*) Shhhhh . . .

Exec: (*To audience*) There's nobody here.

LeeFong: I not very popular.

Puppets laugh again.

Exec: The company warned me about you. They said living here alone made you see things, but I see through your little trick. I represent the company that owns this ship and they said . . .

LeeFong: You not have to come all way out here to thank me. It does take much to run place and things very busy, but . . .

Exec: You only fish one day a week!

LeeFong: It take long preparation.

Exec: Will you please let me finish my business so I can leave?

LeeFong: Sure. Nobody stop you.

Exec: As I was saying . . .

Jay enters.

Jay: Hey, I forgot my knapsack. (*Picks up LeeFong's knapsack by mistake and the strap breaks*)

LeeFong: Wait! Here yours. My strap been broken for years.

Exec: That's not the only thing you've got that's broken. I come here to make a very simple statement and what do I get! (*Mockingly*) "If I knew you were coming I'd a baked a cake." Then you start talking to people that aren't here and now this, this person comes and . . . Well, I'll not let you make a fool out of me.

LeeFong: Too late.

Exec: You just listen and listen good. The company is closing down. That's right — closing down. We're selling our ships so either take it off our . . . uh, purchase the boat or we'll sell it to the slavers.

Puppets: Slavers!

Exec: (*Turning around*) That's what I said, the . . . (*To LeeFong*) Now you've got me doing it. (*As he leaves*) Just remember, pay up or get out!

Executive exits. LeeFong walks slowly after him not believing what he heard.

Spring: I don't want to live on a slave ship.

Summer: (*In Black dialect*) I don't know one spiritual.

Fall: Why didn't we stay where we were?

Spring: And spoil the plan?

Spring: Well, why don't we . . .

Summer: Plan? Who cares about . . .

Fall: We can't just sit and . . .

Winter: (*Interrupting*) Hold on! LeeFong might have enough time. Be patient.

All puppets disappear.

LeeFong: (*Turning to Jay*) Where I going to get money? Why I not see that much money since I find treasure.

Jay: Treasure?

LeeFong: Yes! Uh . . . Emperor's treasure.

Jay: I shouldn't ask, but what Emperor?

LeeFong: That right! I never tell you about Emperor. Uh . . . sit down.

Song: "The Emperor's Song"
(*LeeFong*) (*Standing on a box in deep thought, LeeFong gets an idea and begins speaking under music*)

(*Spoken*) On the rice fields of the Yangtse
Live the Emperor and his court
It was there that my safari
Was suddenly cut short.

(*Sung*) His men bore down with spears
As my men shed their tears.

(*Spoken*) We were taken to the palace
And the Emperor could see
That a man so hard and callous
Was the man that was to be
The one who'd find his treasure
And that one man was me!

Jay: You mean you went on a safari in a rice field?

LeeFong: (*Stepping off box*) You want to hear story or not?

Jay: O.K.!

(*LeeFong*) The Emperor lost his treasure
The one I was to find
Yet failure gives no pleasure
But my head would ease his mind.
So I searched and I hunted
O'er the Orient's vast expanse
Until I found it under
A warrior's pair of pants!

Jay: Was the warrior wearing them?

LeeFong: Uh . . . no! How you think I escape?

(*LeeFong*) The Emperor was so happy
He called his court to say
His daughter who was pretty
Would become my wife that day!

(*Broadly*) And then he called for dance and song
For he'd decided to name me LeeFong!
Yes he called for dance and song
And the woman to whom my love belongs!

At the end of the song the music changes moods and continues under dialogue.

LeeFong: And that whole story. Now I fish here alone and wait.

Jay: Wait?

LeeFong: Yes. To her I am lost. But soon she find me.

Jay: Well uh . . . need some help? Until she comes I mean . . . a person like me can't stay in one place too long.

LeeFong: You already help more than you know. LeeFong is grateful.

Jay: Yeah, but the Emperor and all that . . . I mean naming you LeeFong and all . . .

LeeFong: I prove it! Uh . . . (*gets an idea*) Leeong mean . . . "The Omulet."

Jay: What's an omlet?

LeeFong: Omlet for breakfast. Omulet symbol of Emperor's friendship, and it look like this. (*LeeFong pulls out a beautiful Oriental plate from his knapsack*) It a source of great power. (*Jay comes closer, but LeeFong quickly returns it to the knapsack*) It too valuable to take any risk.

Jay: And what of the princess?

LeeFong: Ah yes . . . the princess. The princess I call Lady. (*Lights dim as spot hits LeeFong*)

Song: "Lady"
(*LeeFong*)

Lady, she's so gentle and so kind
Lady, creating me to be a sign
Oh Lady, if he'd search I'm sure he'd find
A woman dreamt of only in his mind.

Lady, I will try to help him see
Lady, together love was meant to be
Oh Lady, I just wish it could be me
That holds your hand as you travel 'cross the sea.
Lady, my Lady . . . come . . .

Music continues. Through an interpretive dance a woman attempts to relate to different people who appear around her until at the close of the dance she is left alone. Jay dances with Lady and continues the song.

(*Jay*) Lady, she's the fairest of the fair
Lady, if I could just but touch your hair
Oh Lady, I am sure that I'd find there
The treasure that no man finds anywhere.

Lady exits.

(*Jay*) Lady, do you know I dream of you
Lady, if this dream is true
Oh Lady, I will wait and wait unto
My dying day . . . or until I gaze at you.
Oh Lady, Oh Lady, Oh . . .

Jay: Will you ever see her again?

LeeFong: Yes, she come on Oriental New Year, but that may be too late. (*Horn blows from harbor*) Time for nap. Maybe answer come in sleep. Good night.

LeeFong exits into the cabin of the boat. Curtain slowly closes as Jay repeats his song as he walks in front of the curtain.

Song: "I'm a Bum"
(*Jay*) (*A cappella*)

I'm a bum, I'm nobody's son
I'm a lazy, good-for-nothing little
Son-of-a-gun.
But my conscience makes me say
That if I could I surely would
Try to help that man in some small way.

Music continues. Jay starts to exit stage left when he suddenly gets an idea and runs offstage right.

Scene II

Before the scene opens, the narrator again appears sitting in the organ chamber. He continues the song from the opening. This section of the song describes the scene.

Song: So the young man begins to learn
(*Narrator*) But the lesson now to come
Will teach only few people yearn
To learn the truth like that young man.

Begin pantomime. On cue from the song, the curtain opens revealing townspeople all dressed in green standing around the dock. We hear a rhythmic pattern begin on drums as several people begin an exciting native dance. At the conclusion of the dance Jay enters. When Jay enters, the narrator is still under light. Jay attempts to stop a person. The man ignores Jay so he jumps in front of a woman and walks backward as she advances toward him. Jay is tripped by a person going the other way and the lady steps on his hand. The narrator having seen enough yells at Jay.

Narrator: Why don't you tell them you're a friend of LeeFong's?

Jay: (*Standing*) Hey yeah! Listen, I'm a friend of LeeFong's and I . . .

The music stops and everyone stops dead in their tracks and turns on Jay. Music begins as people marching in on Jay. A mad scramble begins and Jay quickly hides. As soon as the people disperse, three people approach Jay's hiding place. The man and two ladies call Jay from hiding.

Male #1: Pssss! Come here, young man. You're safe for the moment.

Female #1: He's right. Come on out!

Jay slowly appears.

Male #1: As you can see, we don't like strangers.

Jay: (*Sarcastically*) Noooo!

Female #2: We dislike smart mouths even more. So say your piece and leave us alone.

Jay: All right! You see my friend LeeFong needs money. I intended to auction off a rare treasure to raise the money.

Female #2: How do you expect to sell us anything dressed like that and then telling us you're a friend of LeeFong's? You prune!

Jay: (*To Female #1*) Is she always this shy? (*Female #2 starts to hit Jay*)

Male #1: Let's not get violent . . . yet! (*To Jay*) And just what do you expect to sell?

Jay: (*Pauses to make sure that no one else is listening*) It's a magic omulet! (*The three people quickly back away*)

Female #1: No! Voodoo! Keep it away!

Female #2: I knew it! Outsiders bring trouble!

Jay: Whoa, slow down! I don't even have it with me. It belongs to LeeFong.

Male #1: LeeFong you say! Oh no, that will never do!

Jay: Why not?

Male #1: LeeFong doesn't belong.

Jay: What!

Male #1: He doesn't fit in. You have noticed that he's different from the rest of us — his clothing, his mannerisms, his way of life. He's not normal! In this parish of New Orleans, we try to blend together.

Jay: What do you mean?

Male #1: For instance, over there we placed the church amongst our dwellings for unity.

Jay: Which one's the church?

Male #1: The green one.

Jay: But they're all green!

Male #1: Now do you get my point?

Song: "We're All the Same"

(*Male #1*) We're all people who don't like to see
Any form of individuality.

(*Female #1*) We're all people who lay down to rest
Knowing we have order in all this mess.

(*Female #2*) We feel comfy and secure
Like a farmer spreads manure
It must be uniform the same
From the mountain to the plain.

(*All*) Chorus
We like it the same
We feel proud that we can claim
No one else has any more or any less.
We try to be strong
And make sure the whole day long
That someone different doesn't come and make a mess.

(*Male #1*) No one has a better house . . .

(*Female #1*) No one has a better spouse . . .

(*Female #2*) These things no one else can claim . . .

(*All*) For we're all exactly the same.

(*Jay*) But you're wrong don't you see
That's no way for you to be.
We're all different and nothing changes fact.
You can't be something else
You just have to be yourself
And to me there's no better way to act.

Jay: That's why LeeFong is right. He's an individual.

Male #1: If he's such a self-made man, then why does he dream up people that don't exist?

Jay: If you mean Lady . . .

Female #1: That's exactly who we mean. He's never left this parish, and no Oriental princess has ever been here. They couldn't have met. He imagined her. And like his invisible friends, she's just a dream.

Female #2: So, if you ask me, LeeFong is just a crazy old man!

Male #1: She's right. He's a crazy old man!

Song: He's a crazy old man
(*Townspeople*) He's got no bird in the hand.

(*Female #2*) He doesn't even have one in the bush.

(*Townspeople*) He's a crazy old man

(*Jay*) But you just don't understand

(*Townspeople*) He's a crazy, crazy, crazy, crazy,
crazy, crazy, crazy, crazy,
crazy . . . crazy old man!

All the townspeople laugh as Jay exits running. The narrator continues his song.

Scene III

Song: Now we see his doubts arise
(*Narrator*) For if LeeFong's dreams are his demise
Then whatever shall Jay do?
Leave him be or scorn him too!

When the scene opens, LeeFong is still on the boat asleep. Jay enters after seeing that the townspeople have left, and knocks on the cabin door.

Jay: LeeFong, wake up, wake up! I've gotta talk! (*No answer*) LeeFong, where are you? (*No answer*) [(*Jay sticks his head in the window*) LeeFong, are you asleep?

LeeFong: (*Appearing through a window*) What sleep! Too noisy!

Jay: Well, hurry out here! We've gotta talk!

LeeFong: (*Enters holding head*) Wait one minute before you speak. I tell you story. When I child, I fish with old man live here before me. Early in morning he catch me outside privy and recite to me a poem that you must hear. He say, "Water on water make sound that all can hear, but water on porcelain fall silent to the ear."

Jay: What's that mean?

LeeFong: It mean you not make unnecessary noise when old man is sleeping!

Jay: I'm sorry, but this is important.

LeeFong: O.K., what is it?

Jay: It's you! The whole parish thinks you're crazy talking about the Orient and your friend the Emperor not to mention the princess! They said you've never been anywhere and no princess has ever been here!

LeeFong: And you take their word over mine?

Jay: Well, what do you expect with you roaming around singing "Lady, my Lady."

LeeFong: Come now, I not sing that bad. But first let me explain something. (*LeeFong goes over to Jay and blows on his face*) What you feel?

Jay: The wind?

LeeFong: Where the wind?

Jay: Everybody knows where the wind is. It's . . . uh

LeeFong: You not point to it!

Jay: Of course not! It's invisible!

LeeFong: To you, yes! That the whole key!

Jay: I'm not sure I follow.

LeeFong: Wind everywhere, but we not able to see it. Same thing happen when Emperor show me glass that make colors out of white light. Let's see . . . what American name?

Jay: A prism.

LeeFong: Right!

Jay: What do they call it in the Orient?

LeeFong: A prism.

Jay: But what's it got to do with seeing things that aren't there?

LeeFong: It a gift. A gift possesssed by all children. They see and believe in the fantasy they create. And there exists things all around that we not hear or see, but they there all the same.

Jay: I know that.

LeeFong: Then why you tell me things I see not real because you not able to see them?

Puppets appear from their positions and cheer.

Song: "Imagination"
(*LeeFong*) Refrain
Ya gotta have imagination
To dream the dreams you wanta dream.
Ya gotta have imagination
To see the things that God put in the scene.

Interlude
With a little bit of faith within your heart
You will someday strike that most important spark
That lights the fire of life so you can start
To understand that life is more
Than gaining success or minding the store, but . . .

LeeFong: Now I think it time you meet rest of family. First, Winter . . .

Winter: Pleased to make your acquaintance.

LeeFong: Then Spring . . .

Spring: (*Shakes his hand and giggles shyly*)

LeeFong: Summer . . .

Summer: (*Laughs as he shakes Jay's hand. He is too hot to touch.*)

LeeFong: And Fall . . .

Fall: Hello . . . (*Sings*)
And we would reinforce today
The same thing that our friend did say . . .

Puppets sing refrain in four part harmony. The music modulates to a higher key as LeeFong and Jay dance and sing refrain with puppets. Lifesize puppets dance on stage as birds and butterflies are flown in.

Scene IV

The scene opens with the narrator continuing his song.

Song: (*Narrator*) He has seen and now believes
But his faith will soon be shaken
For if LeeFong should ever leave
From his dream Jay shall awaken.

LeeFong enters from the boat carrying an easel, paint, and a brush. He is painting when Jay enters carrying a box.

Jay: LeeFong, I have a surprise for you. Wait here. (*Jay exits behind the boat*) Uh LeeFong, by the way, what are you doing?

LeeFong: Painting.

Jay: But you don't have a canvas.

LeeFong: That O.K. I no have subject.

Jay steps out in a beautiful suit complete with hat.

LeeFong: Boy oh boy, you look good. Now, what surprise?

Jay: This is it!

LeeFong: You say, and I quote, "I have surprise for you." That not even my size.

Jay: But it's for you. The suit goes with my new job.

LeeFong: Job? Why job?

Jay: So I can help you buy this ship. In a few days . . .

LeeFong: You better go work now cause here come Admiral.

LeeFong acts very busy. Executive enters.

Exec: There you are. Have you got the money?

Jay: Ah yes, you're that fine gentleman from the shipyard.

Exec: (*Ignoring Jay*) I asked you if you had the money.

LeeFong: (*Stopping his work*) You must have ugly wife.

Exec: (*Thrown off guard*) Why do you ask?

LeeFong: Because all men with ugly wife are grouches. (*LeeFong resumes his work*)

Exec: My wife being ugly has nothing to do with my disposition.

Jay: Then she is ugly.

Exec: Who asked you! I'll have you know my stern mannerisms are part of business training!

Jay: (*To LeeFong*) Is that like potty training?

Exec: Will you shut up! The shipyard trains us all to be stern, (*music cue for chord*) heartless, (*chord*) and mean!

Song: "The Shipyard"
(*Exec*) Refrain
I love the shipyard, love them sails
From the east across the west.
The meaner, crueler we can be
Will bring us more not less.

Yes I love the shipyard, love them sails
From the north across the south.

(*LeeFong*) But if he don't shut up very soon
Stuff a fish into his mouth.

(*Exec*) We have no use for such a boat
Where ships no longer run.

(*LeeFong*) But you foret my dear, dear friend
That there still sails that one!

(*Exec*) My, my you are so funny
For that one boat brings no money.

LeeFong: What he expect, Queen Mary?

(*Exec*) I love the shipyard, love them sails
From the east across the west.
The meaner, crueler we can be
Will bring us more not less.

(*LeeFong & Jay*) Yes he loves the shipyard, loves them sails
How stupid can he be?

Exec: But if you don't pay up be tomorrow, we'll see what we shall see.

(*Exec*) I love the shipyard, love them sails
To the left and to the right.
The meaner, crueler we can be
Will leave us few to fight.

Exec: So remember, you have the money by tomorrow or else!

LeeFong: (*Angrily*) Or else what?

Exec: Or else out!

LeeFong: (*Rolling up his sleeves*) And who going to put me out?

Exec: My boss! He's due in tomorrow to close the deal with you or the slavers!

LeeFong: You tell boss if he put one foot on my boat, I tear it from leg and put it where it should be! Then I . . . I . . . Jay, help! (*LeeFong begins coughing*)

Jay: What's Fong, I mean what's wrong?

LeeFong: I too old to tell off business men.

Jay: Lie down right here. I'll get the doctor. (*Jay exits*)

Puppets rise slowly and gaze at LeeFong helplessly.

LeeFong: Friends, are you there?

Puppets: We're here, LeeFong.

LeeFong: (*Weakly*) Old friends, my visa expire too soon. It not yet time for her so I must ask you to complete my plan. It for your safety. You not let Jay leave ship. (*Puppets look at each other*) Remember, Jay not leave ship. (*LeeFong loses consciousness*)

Spring: What are we going to do?

Fall: One of us will have to talk to Jay.

Summer: That's obvious, but which one of us is elected?

All three puppets look at Puppet #1 — Winter.

Winter: Now wait a minute! You can't decide just like that.

Summer: You heard him say "old friends." That puts you first in line.

Scene V

The narrator appears and continues his song.

Song: Minor key
(*Narrator*) The stars won't shine as bright tonight
As they hang there in the sky
For the world has lost a little light
It's time for LeeFong to die.

As the scene opens the doctor is speaking with Jay. LeeFong is offstage.

Doctor: I'm sorry. There was nothing I could do. (*Starts to exit*)

Jay: What happened? He was fine earlier. What went wrong?

Doctor: I can't explain. There was no specific cause. His life just . . . . just left his body.

Jay: Well, thank you anyway, doctor. (*Doctor exits*)

As Jay begins to enter the boat, Winter appears.

Winter: Jay, what are you going to do?

Jay: About what?

Winter: About the ship. We need you now to keep our home.

Jay: Why me! I just got here and now it's all on me! Why should I! Why should I give up part of my life for something . . . for something that doesn't exist!

Jay storms into the boat. The other puppets slowly appear.

Winter: You think he meant me?

Summer: Grown-ups! They're all so uppity!

Fall: It's not Jay's fault. He just doesn't understand.

Spring: Understand what?

Winter: Us! He doesn't understand us or LeeFong. He just wasn't around when it all started.

Summer: Yeah, but we got problems too!

Song: "We're the Seasons"
(*Puppets*)
(*Winter*) When we were just the seasons
Each living on our own,

(*Summer*) Our lives were dull and boring
With no family or no home.

(*Spring*) Then LeeFong called us together
Gave us bodies as you see,

(*Fall*) And we're no longer lonely
But as happy as can be.

(*All*) Refrain
We're the seasons round we go
From year to blessed year.
And although people rarely know
Each one of us lives here.

(*Winter*) (*Dramatically*)
But now dear LeeFong has disappeared
His plan has reached no end,
And if Jay leaves before she comes
New lives we'll all begin.

(*All*) Refrain
We're the seasons round we go
From year to blessed year.
But if Jay leaves us all to fate
It's for our lives we'll fear . . . for . . .
Winter!
Spring!
Summer!
Fall!
We'll fear!

Spring:
Summer: What are we going to do?
Fall:
Winter: Nothing. It's up to her now.

Scene VI

Song: Now the story we must close
(*Narrator*) But the message always flows
To those who'll lend an ear
To what's about to happen here.

Narrator: The date is the second moon after the winter's solstice, or for those slower than normal, the Oriental New Year.

The scene takes place in the organ chamber. Jay enters in his bum outfit and knapsack and goes to LeeFong's grave.

Jay: (*Drops knapsack*) Oh, I'm late. They've already . . . . Anyway, I've got something to tell you. (*Music cue for Lady's song - reprise*) You know, we're a lot alike — you and me. Could be brothers if you were younger. I mean, if you had been younger. (*Silence - Jay is nervous*) But . . . but that isn't all we got in common, oh no! (*Pauses*) We're dreamers, LeeFong, a nice word for bum! And you wanta know something else? You can't change what you are. (*Pauses*) It's not that I didn't try. I thought what you said was true. That you are what you believe you are, and that the world is as good or bad as you want to believe. I even thought imagination had become reality! (*Pause in music*) But no, I am what I am. (*Turning to LeeFong's grave*) And you are what you are . . . dead! (*Kneeling*) No dream, no song, and no make believe woman will ever change that.

Song: Reprise of "Lady"
(*Jay*) (*To LeeFong*)
It's silly to think a dream can come true
It's silly to care for anyone but you
It's silly to think people will come through
And be there when you're feeling low and blue.

(*Standing - to audience*)
It's crazy to talk to things that aren't there
It's crazy to wait for someone off somewhere
Or to think that she's so beautiful and fair . . .
It's silly, it's crazy, it's . . .

A shrouded woman appears. Jay is slowly backing up on the last line of the song when he bumps into the woman.

Jay: Excuse me, but I didn't expect anyone to . . .

The woman does not speak. She moves slowly to the grave and kneels.

Jay: (*Upset*) Well . . . goodbye. (*Runs off*)

As soon as he exits, the music to Lady's song continues. The woman makes sure no one is around, and on cue from the music she removes her veil revealing a beautiful Oriental face. The townspeople come on stage and Jay pushes his way through them. Suddenly we hear the chimes indicating Lady's presence. The crowd parts as Lady walks slowly down the dock toward him. The narrator speaks from the organ chamber.

Narrator: Got a problem?

Jay: Yeah, I'm still seeing things that don't exist!

Narrator: What do you plan to do?

Jay: (*Turning to Narrator*) Hop on the next ship and get out!

A horn is heard as Jay starts to exit.

Narrator: If you do, you're throwing away your only existing chance for happiness.

Jay: And you think you know what'll make me happy!

Narrator: Yes! (*Narrator removes his mask revealing the face of LeeFong*) When someone care, you very happy. I offer you chance to be loved.

Jay: I feel more confused than loved.

LeeFong: Maybe I make you feel better. Lady not grow up like most children. She not have mother and father like you. She not even have friend. So she had to make up friend and she call that friend LeeFong. Now I truly her friend because I find you.

Jay: Why me? For what reason?

LeeFong: Look at her, Jay. (*Lady comes closer*) She grown woman. She need more than I can give. She need human.

Jay: Human! Me?

Summer: Let's not push it.

LeeFong: Lady never have warmth of human love, but it never too late.

Jay: Then she isn't a princess?

LeeFong: Princess just a name. It not important. But love exist because people exist. It very important. She will be princess to anyone who love her.

Winter: Oh, I just love weddings.

LeeFong: Not so fast. (*To Jay*) Life full of surprises, and I make no promise. But you say yourself, we a lot alike. (*Silence*) Well? You stay or not?

Jay: (*Looks at Lady seriously, then smiles*) I stay!

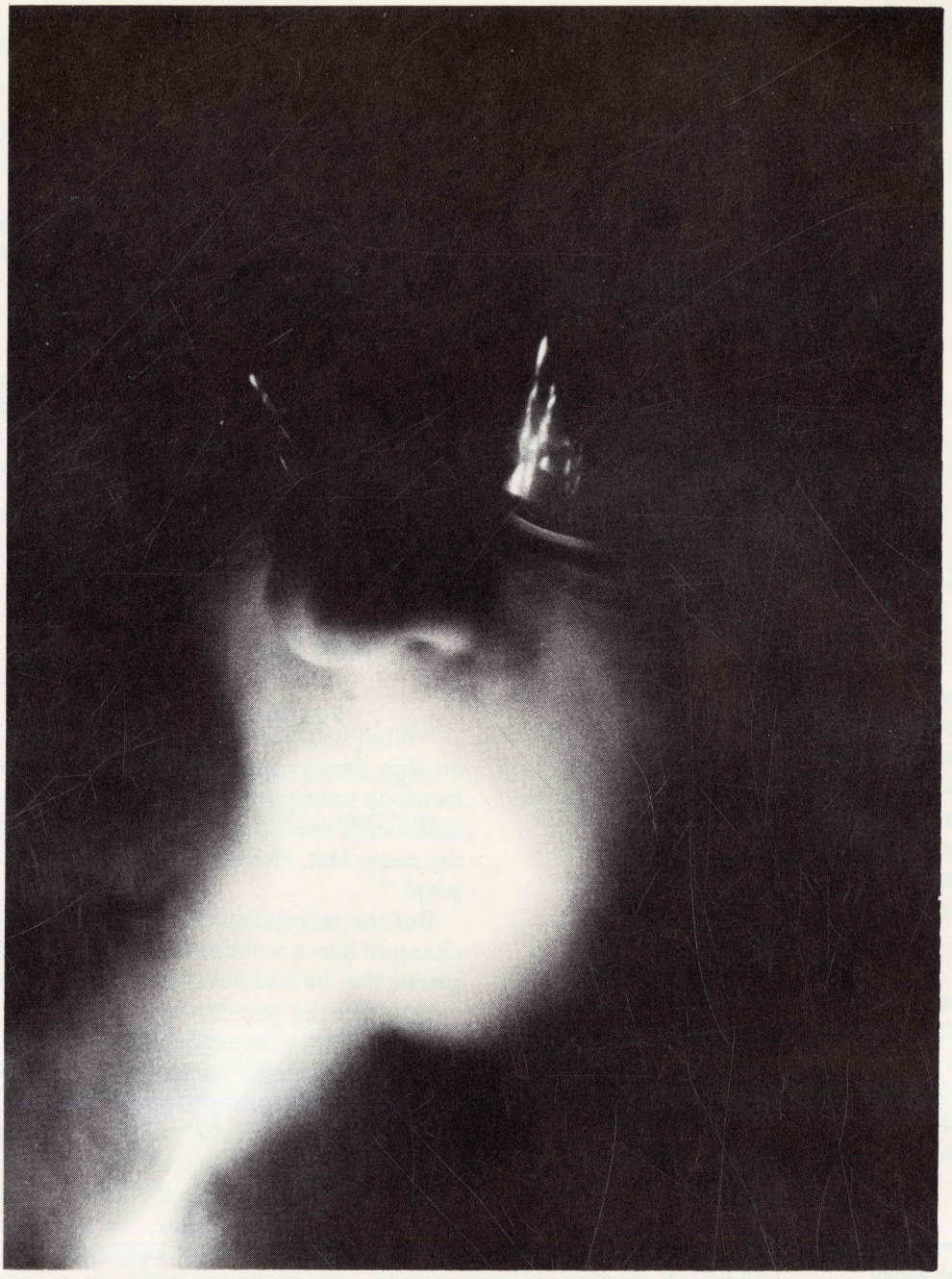
The puppets cheer as Jay and Lady embrace.

Jay: LeeFong, I know I've been pretty ignorant since I came here, but is it really true?

LeeFong: What?

Jay sings the refrain and first verse of "Imagination" as puppets appear on stage dancing. When the stage is full of colorful objects and people, they sing the refrain of "Imagination."

by
Sonny Sellers



The Fire-Eater *Randy Stewart*

gossamer apronstring/severed

a new page, new start:
new life.
the past burns off like morning fog,
you stand clean and talk of light.
living by star-time,
being lit by history and the forgotten,
no need to pretend, you are
the sensitive flame.

Bill Miller

To the Children I Have Borne

You were born of the whole in my heart
and I feared for your young fragility
when you faced the world with my soul.
As I watched you mature,
I did not miss the children
that flowed crimson between my legs;
you filled the void left by blood
with the songs I had given you to sing.
Time has eased the pain of your birth
and when I look to you now,
even the sad faces bring a smile.

Marie Godwin

WINTER WARM

The fall wind starts to blow
Pushing summer out
The pine straw starts to fall
The green grass turns to brown
The death of winter comes
As no spring life can remain
But no chilly wind
Will ever drive your smile away
From my heart.

I wish for my love, all happiness to find
Though even winter comes,
Warm thoughts are in my mind
I want to hold you close and drive the cold away
Come and stand beside me
I want for you to stay
My love

The summer was so good
But you were far away
The warm days felt so fine
But lonesomeness still remained
Now the days grow cold
But I don't really care
You are here beside me
And your smile warms me now
My love

Buddy Hall

The Lonely Caterpillar

"What will I do; where will I go? Am I destined to sit on this barren tree trunk? All I can see is now, the future is unimportant. Oh, the birds, how they fly and make such beautiful music. All I can do is plod along on my many feet, chewing every now and then on a leaf or petal."

But the caterpillar did leave his unhappy habitat. He changed into a wondrous butterfly and flew to far away places that he had never imagined existed.

One day the wondrous butterfly was flying along in the midst of a beautiful meadow when he suddenly spied a young man sitting all alone. "Why am I here? Why do I even bother to live? I have no one to love and no special gift to make me rich and famous. I will die an old man having accomplished nothing." And the wondrous butterfly looked back to the time when he had been a lonely caterpillar, so sad and hopeless. He looked at his wondrous wings that he now possessed and knew that he had a message for the world to hear. But the world would not listen and the butterfly knew he must work quickly for his life was drawing to a close. He searched for the boy he had overheard, and turned and looked, and the young man was dead.

"Oh no, oh please no, you had so much to give," cried the butterfly. But the young man's soul whispered softly and said, "How fervently a young man's heart cries out for the riches of this life. If only I had seen that my riches lay in the colors of your wings."

Darlene Zills

There are few women I see
Who do not strike me
As trivial.

And I have looked at women.
I have seen
shimmering legs
coyly crossed;

I have heard the chit-chat;

I have known the clutter and
the causes
cast away;

I once traded thoughts for tears.

Because of this
it was with joy I sat with you

and traded thought for thought.

Mary Anderson

DESERT STORM

glass wind cuts
beneath clothes,
thickens breath,
stains memory
til no cloud is without power
and mystery is a present thing
like mischief in the making of a meaness

Bill Miller

While sitting down here in the beautiful City of "Sumerset" located near "Peyton Place," we are looking for "The Guiding Light" and trying to "Search for Tomorrow." "As the World Turns" it seems as though we are living in "Another World," where "The Edge of Night" used to be "Dark Shadows."

In "The Secret Storm" we hope to see "Ryan's Hope" come true and in the "Days of Our Lives" we are going to make an appointment to see "The Doctors" to find out if "All My Children" have just "One Life to Live" which will be called "Love of Life." In conclusion, we want everyone to remember that: "Love is a Many Splendored Thing."

Lou Ida Boykin

there. Sitting down on the ground, Candace laid the gun by her side. She pulled her knees up to her chest, wrapped her arms about her knees and leaned her head back to the hazy sky. It was all gray. She felt numb. No real feeling. No emotion. Not nervous. Nothing.

She stretched her legs out and reached for the gun. She noticed the sweat shirt damp with perspiration clinging to her underarms. She looked over the long slender barrel and noticed the rich smell of oil that came from the often polished wooden butt. Her mother had given her father this gun three years earlier, and it still looked like new. Candace flipped the safety lever off and cocked the gun. She lay down and placed the gun barrell up under her chin. The cold metal barrel against her warmer neck was shocking. She shivered. She lay there on the damp ground just staring at the sky, not thinking. Watching. The sun was beginning to rise. Light grappling to get through low hanging fog on the far ridge was eye-catching. The persistence of the light to thrust itself through the overbearing cloud spoke loudly. "Keep trying. You can do it," Candy heard herself thinking. The light? What was she rooting for? Sitting up to think, to look . . . inside, she lay the gun on the ground to her side. The firing pin was released by the jar. It fired.

The alarm clock sounded. Mr. Sparks knew it was 5:30, so he got out of bed, dressed and walked quietly down the hallway and glanced into Candy's room. She was gone. "She must have decided to surprise me with breakfast this morning," he thought to himself. Mornings were bad for him. He and his wife had always started the day together talking over coffee at the kitchen table before Candy got up.

He walked on to the kitchen, but no one was there. "Candy," he called just as he turned and noticed the note on the table. His face tensed as he looked out the window. His heart began racing as he asked himself, "My God, where could she have gone?" He jerked the back door open and ran onto the porch. The pasture gate was open, so he ran through it and toward the little hill — "Candy's Mountain," they had called it when she was younger. Strange he should have thoughts like this now.

The shot crashed through the still quiet of the dawn and hung in the air for an enduring moment. Candace caught her breath quickly and drew her knees to her chest and lay over on her side. "Oh God," she sobbed, "oh God." She realized with sudden sickening reality that could have been the shot she had planned for it to be.

The blast tore through the air and jutted fragments of pain as Mr. Sparks fell onto his knees and wailed, "Candy!" As if his effort to scream her name would restore life to her being. He stumbled back to his feet and ran on ground that appeared only one foot away from his face as he saw it through full tears.

Candy heard her father's yell, but when she stood up, her legs were too weak and shaky for her to move. She looked up to the crest of the hill and there stood her father. He ran and grabbed her shoulders and stared at her for a moment with a questioning look. Then he hugged her tightly and sobbed softly. Candy looked back over her shoulder to the ridge where the sun lay brightly.

Cindy Shirley

To Change the Past

Rain's slithering down.
All I want is sweet sleep
And to spend a quiet morning
Talking to you.

I'm so lonely here;
So very bored.
I wouldn't be
If you were here.

Do you know that I miss you?
Or did I neglect to tell you
In rattling on
With endless nothings.

Did we ever get down
To the real of life?
Or is it buried
Somewhere underneath.

Or hidden somewhere overhead?
I would have gladly
Shared the morrow with you,
Had I had the morrow.

I wish we'd grown to the point
Where we thought-shared
Bits and glimmers
Of what truth we had.

Neither of our faults;
And then again, both.
Life goes on.
It almost always does.

Still, I wish you were here.
You'd help me whittle away the time.
Sometimes my stainless steel knife
Gets stuck in the wood.

Susan Keith

Harmony

Discouraged by the discord in my well-planned order
And the intentional striving to see a ray of light in the void,
Somewhere along in the search
In clutching the darkness,
I realize such deliberation is robbery — senseless and overanxious
Like the snatching of undeveloped thought
the kidnapping of an unborn child
or the squeezing of unripe grapes
in too eager anticipation of inebriation —

Heaving in the exhaustion of trying to find what seems not to be there
my soul quietly guards what's hidden in its roots —
words of life that as yet the snow-covered tree is unready to unfold,
seeds unready to give blossoms,
branches unready to bear fruit.

But when the spring thaw arouses the slumbering mass
And foundations are farred,
Mountains of ice break up,
Sunlight dances on the glistening pools, ready to flow
into oceans vast, and my soul becomes fluid.
In my veins quiver the pulsations of fresh blood;
Cold clear drops shimmer on half naked branches,
expectantly,
as if the universe would come alive at their release,
like notes waiting for a reason to burst into song . . .

Life is ready to give,
and I long to be part of the music.

Denise A. Ezell

You don't really understand human nature unless you know why a child on a merry-go-round will wave at his parents everytime around -- and why his parents will always wave back.

-- copied

Cindy Shirley

White Fire

The old firetower was in sight now, not far up ahead. The dirt road leading to it cut its way through the trees like a snake making its way through the jungle. The trees shielded the dirt road from intense sunlight and Karen had noticed a drop in temperature as soon as she turned off the paved road. By the shade of the trees and the constant hum of the car motor, her two-year-old son had been quieted and lulled to sleep on the seat beside her.

Billy had always been a good child and Karen wondered, as she glanced at his delicate, peaceful features, what this journey held in store for him. His short life had certainly been one of confusion and still she had no answers. All she knew was that this was her last chance, her last attempt. She had tried for over a year to regain the strength she had once, and her search had finally led her here. This was where the source of her strength had died and this confrontation was the only thing left that could possibly unite again the shattered pieces of reality that were her mind.

She pulled the car up under a stately old pine about fifty feet from the tower. Karen got out of the car leaving the door open so Billy could feel the breeze and, hopefully, go on sleeping.

The tower sat on the edge of a cliff and as she began to climb up to it, the tightness in her stomach and legs warned her of her mounting fear. The closer she came to the ledge the more convinced she was that she had made a mistake. She was sure she wasn't ready for this but she knew she had to keep walking, trying to disregard her fear. When she reached the edge of the cliff, Karen stood silent and shaking, looking out.

She was unaware that the hills rolled and tumbled as if two great hands had held the Earth between them and pressed, forcing the ground and stone into mountains, hills and valleys. She didn't see that the forest that tumbled along with the earth was, of all colors, green. What she did see was a scar. About five miles out from where she stood looking down was the terrible reminder of what had happened here. For miles and miles the earth was ravaged; charred and bald. Karen had heard and tried to imagine, but never fully comprehended the extent of the damage until now. She knew well the power of destruction that fire had possessed but she had never felt its awesomeness. For the first time, she felt the hopelessness of the men who had tried to suppress the blaze. Picturing them in the face of so vengeful an adversary, Karen became painfully aware of the insignificance of her own life. She became fully aware of the helplessness of humanity.

An overwhelming depression came over her as she came to these realizations, such as she had never known. She had been depressed many times since the day this fire had left her and Billy alone. But this time, the depressing was accompanied by a bitterness she could not control. She was bitter at the cruelty of the blaze but more bitter at the unfairness of the God that had allowed it to rage, so rampant for so long. She must have re-lived that day a million times never once experiencing or realizing, until now, how temporary and expendable everything was.

In the next few moments, that eventually stretched into hours, Karen began to relinquish the fight. She knew she was sacrificing her sanity, but she saw no other alternatives. And this acceptance of defeat allowed her delirious, scattered mind to slip temporarily into an exhausted and muddled sleep; still turning over and churning in a state of semi-consciousness those questions that needed answers so badly.

Karen didn't know how long she drifted in this cloud of apathetic despair, but when she became fully conscious again the sun had begun to set. She rose to her feet, careful to avert her eyes from the scarred land below, and started to turn toward her car. But before she moved she began to experience the familiar feeling that someone was watching her. Her first thought was that Billy had wakened but a quick glance at the car revealed his still, sleeping figure. She turned toward the west and there on a hill not twenty feet from where she stood was one of the most beautiful sights she had ever seen. A white mare, there motionless against the setting sun. It was not watching her as she suspected, but instead, its gaze was fixed out upon the scar and the tree line that resumed beyond it. Karen knew without trying that she was unable to move. She wanted to go closer to it, to touch it and become part of it but she also wanted to run from it. Inside was a turbulence of countless emotions she could not identify, but outside, never a muscle flinched of woman or beast.

The sun continued sinking below the hill the mare stood on, sending up as it went, a myriad of vibrant shades of red, orange, and yellow. Each shade seemed to sear into the white flesh of the animal creating an illusion of dancing fire on every inch of its body. Karen shuttered with delight and anguish at the sight. The delight began to fade as she watched the pseudo-fire engulf the animal and was replaced by a fear that was rapidly building into panic. She wanted out of that place now, more than anything else. But the very second she tried to move, the gaze of the mare shifted decisively and intentionally to where she stood as if it had been fully aware of her presence all along.

Karen hadn't noticed anything about the animal's eyes until now; she hadn't been able to see past its blazing flesh. But as the sun sank lower and the flesh began to cool, the eyes began to burn. They burned into Karen with a searing power more intense than that of the sun as it consumed the white flesh. She tried

desperately, frantically, to keep from looking into those eyes, but she could feel them burning through to parts of her she had so carefully hidden. And as she grew weaker, the power drawing her eyes to the eyes of the mare only grew stronger. She knew she was going to have to meet that penetrating gaze, it was inevitable, and when she saw it could be prolonged no further, she lifted her face. The instant their eyes met they locked into a strange and incessant bond that Karen could neither explain nor identify. Immediately, her crowded mind began dismissing any disturbing thoughts that could possibly distract it from total concentration on those perplexing, yet soothing orbs. Nothing else seemed to matter.

The eyes were colorless and seemingly empty, but Karen knew in every pleading portion of her soul that those eyes held secrets, leading not to things she had lost but to things she had never known. They were windows peering into that tranquil, abyssal state of being that only the wisest and spiritually guided had ever attained. Looking into them, she felt as if she were in the presence of more than just that one captivating creature. For the knowledge they contained was cumulative, and the way they washed over her body, creating in her feelings of inadequacy and inferiority, convinced Karen that they came from past ages of lost wisdom. They stripped her of fear and pride leaving her with the humbling sensation of an undeserving observer.

She did not know how long they stood there, suspended, in the silence of the new fallen night. She had lost all concept of time. But there was something comforting in the distance the animal was keeping that made her want it to stay. She had become aware, however, of a deathlike stillness that had descended with the night. There was no motion or sound and Karen thought the world itself must have stopped its perpetual rotations.

She was there, floating in the midst of *nothing* and at the same time experiencing the existence of *something* beyond her comprehension when it happened. The animal moved. It was slight and sudden, but it was motion and it sent shocks of anticipation chilling through Karen's body. It was just one small step, but then there was another and the bond between their eyes remained secure.

She did not know what was happening to her as the mare came closer, but its impending proximity caused her fear to begin to return. She did not know why it came toward her, but she knew it was not out of normal animal curiosity. It moved at a steady pace, never shifting its gaze from her and never slowing. There was something weak inside her demanding protection, feeling threatened, and this, together with her mounting fear was whipping her delirious mind into an uncontrollable frenzy. She knew she was defenseless and all she could do was plead. "Stop! Please!" she screamed. "What do you want?" But her words fell as useless as the last autumn leaf and the mare didn't stop. She felt her knees begin to give and her head begin to swim. Blackness crept into her mind, closing in on her sight. She wanted to run but all she could do was close her eyes and pretend it wasn't there, coming closer. She didn't want to see and she didn't want to know. But it became obvious in the next moment, that closed eyes would not make it go away. It was so close now that Karen could feel the heat radiating from its body. She could feel its hot breath playing around her features and whispering through her hair, and she could feel something wet on her face. Karen looked and felt like a whimpering, wounded doe cringing in expectation of the fatal shot from a relentless hunter. As the immense weight and force of the animal pressed against her body Karen wondered what was keeping her on her feet. It felt as though their flesh was being fused until their souls became entwined. Then, as suddenly as its first step had occurred, the pressure was gone. In that moment of desperate relief Karen opened her eyes, assuring herself it had all been a dream. But what she was in that last moment before she lost consciousness was not a dream, and it branded her soul with priceless convictions she would never lose. Looking up she found her face no more than two inches from the pure, white, blood-streaked face of the mare. The blood that flowed freely from evenly spaced holes pierced into the crown of the animal's head trickled down its face and dropped, warm and light, on to Karen's cheek. Its eyes, which had been windows, revealed no more of their tranquility. Instead, they reflected all of what was around Karen and all that was within her. They were two glaring mirrors of what she refused to end.

Seeing was devastating, but Karen fought desperately to keep her consciousness, to become aware. For the first time in over a year she did try not to run.

When a small, gentle hand touched the tear-stained face, bringing Karen back, the first rays of morning had begun peering through the gray haze. She stayed there for a moment, holding onto Billy's hand and touching his tiny fingers to her lips. Her mind pondered the events of the night and she smiled. What it was, where it came from or just what it had done to her, she didn't know. But she felt strong and good and that was all she had ever needed. Karen stood up with Billy's hand in hers and turned toward the scar. It was still there as ugly and terrifying as it had been, but on the inner edge of the treeline that surrounded it, the brush and trees were a lighter green, small and obviously new. It was

all growing and so was she.

Billy tugged at his mother's hand and cried, "Home, Mama, Home." Gathering him into her arms, she gave one last look at the rolling forest below here and the hill to the west. "Yes, Billy," she said, "we're going home."

Trena Bush

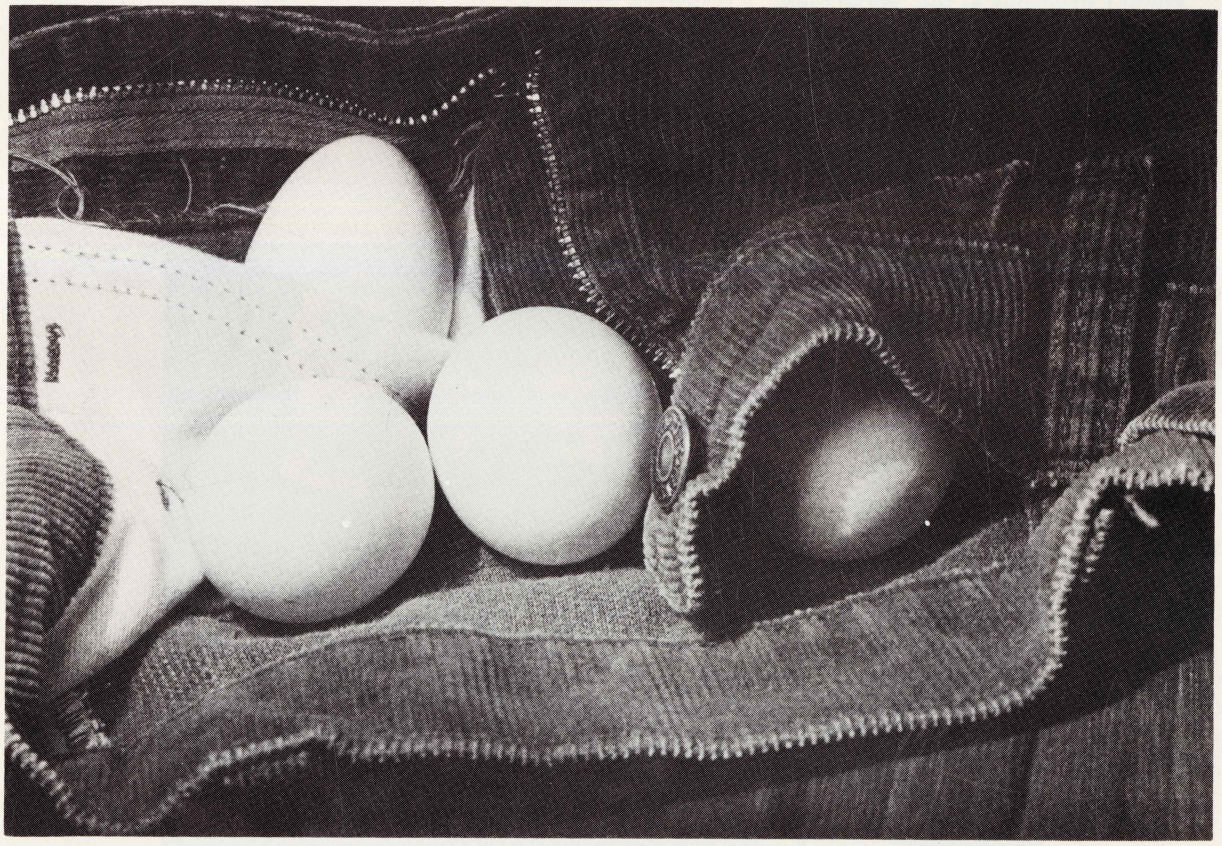
When I was home
we sat and ate together.

Her little son looked up,
"Will you spend the night?"

My soul rose to my eyes
and neither smiled.

I simply answered "no,"
and thought how strange
that he should ask
what he's the answer to.

Mary Anderson



Texture

Amy Branan

You

In and out of darkness
falter, fail, and die
betrayal of the darkness
you just, lie, lie, lie.

R. Scott Farris

For My Mother On Our Seventh Christmas Since Her Divorce

The season's reds and greens
are reflected in your eyes —
jolly Mrs. Claus,
retrieving ribbons
so as not to waste.
The weather has betrayed us
and once more the sky is clear.
I collect wrapping paper
and remember when Mrs. Claus
spent Christmas at the North Pole
and Santa Claus never failed.

Marie Godwin

February 5

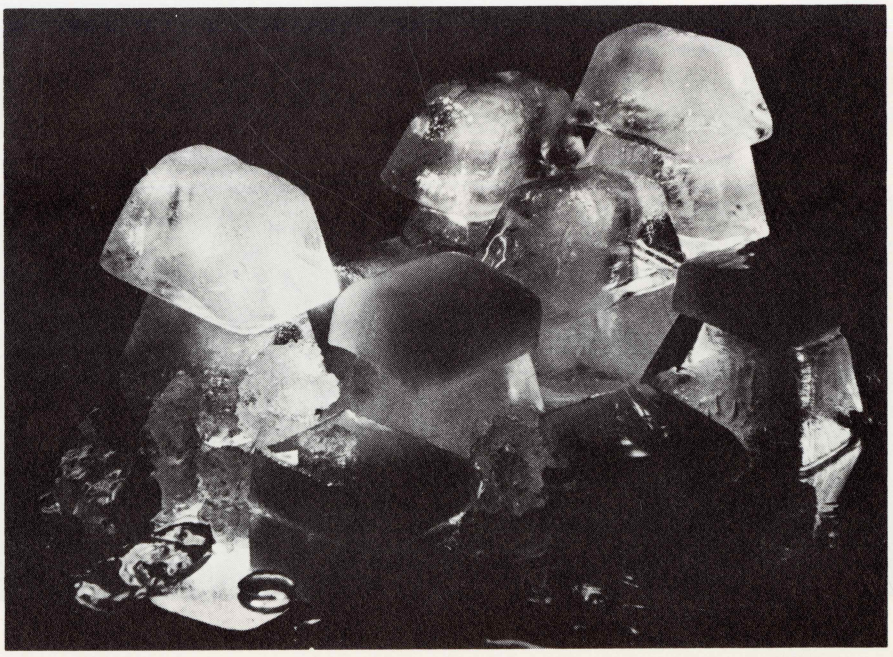
There is no poetry worth reading
save perhaps that written
on new moon nights
by Vampires
stakes stuck in their hearts
suicide notes
written with burnt-out stars
that offer no glimpse of hope

but even then
you must be careful
least some light shines through
and convinces you
the earth is round
and the universe wonderful
life delicious
so you eat it up day by day
until consumed
blood sucked out of your throat
you cast away your corpse
into some hollow grave

do you see what I mean?
there is no poetry worth reading

no poetry.

Isabella Scavetta



Dee Dee Elling

For Patti, Who Is Too Real

You will die princess —
because your tongue is a razor
that slices through the darkness
where the dead are hiding
in blind comfort;
because your hand is a match
that can burn only as far
as the end of the stick.
Because you are a mirror
whose glass is too clear,
someone will shatter you
in desperation.
You, with your smoking eyes
like the ash of a cigarette
will find yourself stamped
out by the heel of one
who is offended by
the boldness of your odor
and you will have no hope
for an Easter resurrection,
because you have traded in
your pink ruffled dress
for a fire that will consume you
with the power of a Baptist hell
in the mind of a terrified child.

Marie Godwin

Tower Poetry Award

Dark clouds rise up on the horizon
They'll soon pass by and be gone.
I look around me and I wonder
At how things change as I grow.

Each day goes by with a sunset
Not quite the same as it did before.
I sit down and I ponder
What's to become of me.

Will my name be remembered by any man
For the things I left impressed on his soul?
Will my words be recorded in a special sort of way
In an open book never to be closed?

Or will I simply sit back in my soft plastic world
And be satisfied to breathe
To touch no one and live untouched.

Mike Giles

My Loneliness Defense Mechanism

I've come so far,
And sometimes it was hard.
But I've learned so very very much.
But when it's been hard
My spirit was not marred
For I always had someone to touch.

Though at times they're hard to perceive,
Their presence I must always believe.
Those friends are pure.
Those friends are sure.
They are what I long to be.

David Phillips

Gloster's Visions

Breathing vegetation, seen
Through eyes within the dream . . .
Gloster doesn't know if what he sees is what should seem.

It's said the boy has visions.
And he travels far with few provisions.
For who can make decisions, inside of Gloster's head?

Soaring birds with jagged wings
Sound a warning from above.
But what could be more wretched than a life devoid of love?

Gloster wanders nobly onward
All alone and full of dread.
For who can see the visions, inside of Gloster's head?

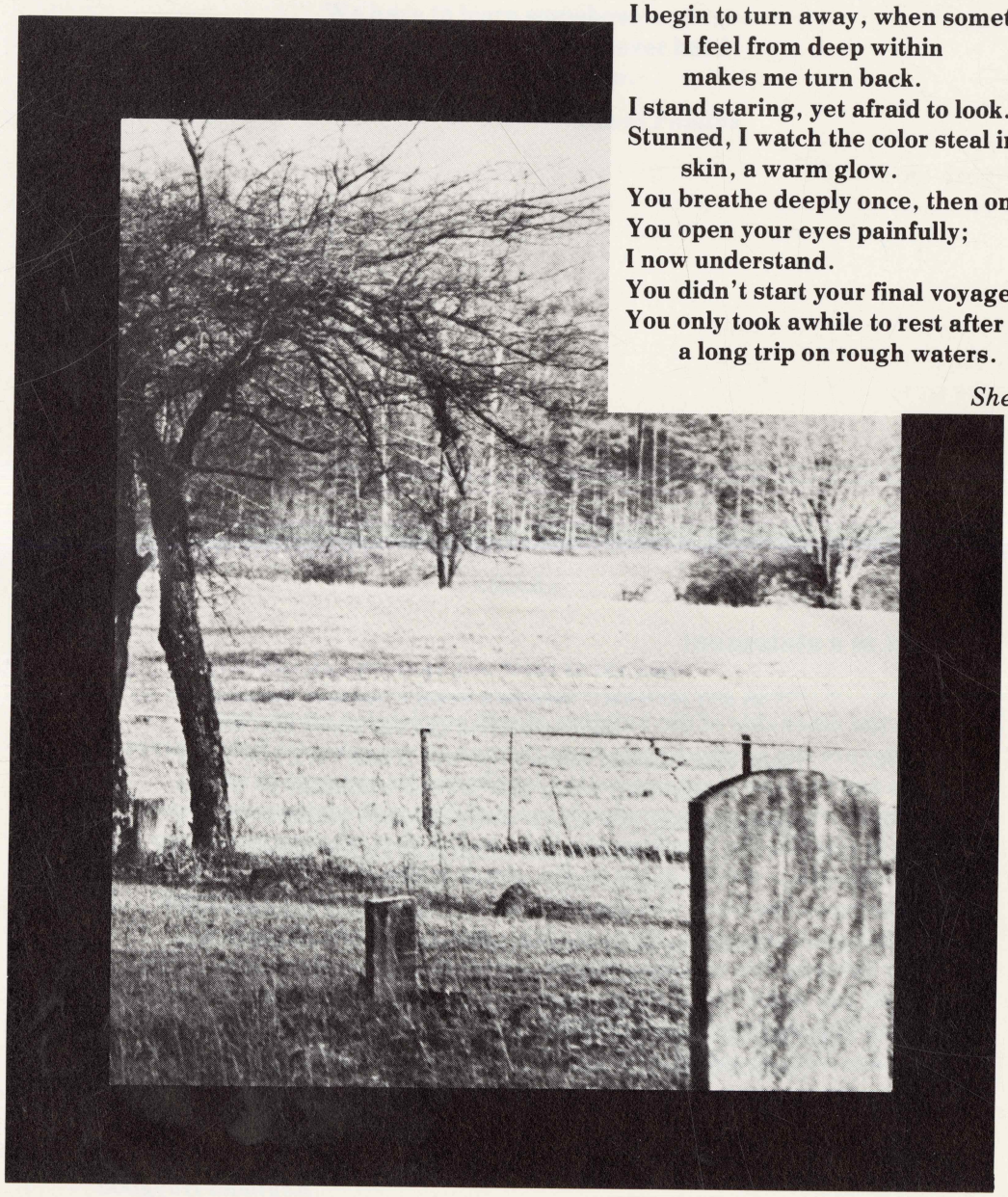
Serpents and Beasts are closing in as Gloster cries in vain.
He surrenders to an unknown king who takes away his pain,
As the silent bells of mourning, quaver, inside of Gloster's head.

David Richardson

Death

I see your hand and touch it softly,
My fingers move up your arm and linger
on your shoulder.
They caress your neck and wander over
your throat.
My palms glide over your jawline and
make a frame for your face.
Carefully I trace your brow . . .
your eyes . . . your nose.
Each feature, part of a finely chiseled
Grecian statue,
So still.
I kneel and my lips press on yours.
I slowly rise.
I see tears on your cheeks and recog-
nize them as my own.
I begin to turn away, when something
I feel from deep within
makes me turn back.
I stand staring, yet afraid to look.
Stunned, I watch the color steal into your
skin, a warm glow.
You breathe deeply once, then once again.
You open your eyes painfully;
I now understand.
You didn't start your final voyage,
You only took awhile to rest after
a long trip on rough waters.

Sherry Price



Denise Beavers

This Thing of Neutering

Fixed —
as if something had been
malfunctioning
needed repair

the cat sat
contented — we said —
in his new found
role of eunuch
without a harem.

Isabella Scavetta

if art is a statement

On the other side of the building of self-proclaimed all-knowing intelligence the rainbow casts from chrome across concrete below street-lights and into the glass separating loneliness for sad eyes to look through. who are we to wonder in our building with ultraomnipotence. there is fear like the breaking of a light switch that crushes your sleep in the morning. we are going to die. death is like concrete.

in between the black and the white we are alive with red animation breathing in our bodies. there is night. there is touch. there is a terror between fire and ice. deeper. there is a heart pumping multiple-colored life somewhere deep. emotion like rain streets reflecting the moving planets bend inside four billion human beings on an intricately immense work of spherical art rushing with nauseating speed through the sky.

the world is a symbol.
the individual is a statement.

Reginald Haygood

America?

The quality is down
And the cost is high,
Although we frown,
We continue to buy.

We are like sheep
So easily shorn,
But we've no right to weep,
For suckers aren't born.

Our troubles soon shall perish,
And maybe so shall we.
And this money which we cherish,
Could soon just cease to be.

Maybe that's just what we need.
We have to learn somehow.
The warnings which we never heed,
Are coming true right now.

David Phillips

CRAZY

When was the last time you went to the zoo?
You shook Mother's hand and said "How do you do?"
When sun fades the sky red from blue
Have you ever had a star-wish come fantastically true?
Chase on rainbows forever and never find coins,
Follow winding roads to know which way you're going;
Little stupid things that make life so crazy
Like lying in a warm bed and feeling so lazy.
The muffled mind and the restless soul,
It's funny how your brain holds more than you know,
Don't make a promise about how far you'll go,
Today may go fast and tomorrow real slow.
Find the crazy things in life and stick with them to the end,
You can have ten good lovers and only one good friend,
When you pass by the cage with the monkey in the tree,
Wink at it, if it fusses . . . you'll know it's me.

Leigh Ruddick

The Pilgrimage

I

Harry liked beer. He sometimes drank in the morning, more often at night, but on this particular day he would do both. Keeping alert for a bar which would provide sufficient atmosphere, he walked down the sunlit avenue amid the throbbing movement of automobiles and people.

Entering the sanctuary of "Dirty Mable's," he was immediately accosted by a bent, grey man with a bulbous nose. The spritely gentleman was eager to speak with Harry, and he led him to the bar by the arm. Though somewhat startled, Harry was curious as to what "the old fart" had to say. Having ordered beer for them both, the old man turned abruptly to Harry and peered into his eyes. He leaned forward in his chair and spoke in soft tones. "Should it happen to rain today, I shall be compelled to spend the afternoon here . . . in this bastion of . . .," his voice trailed off and he took a large swallow from his mug. Wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, he resumed, his voice barely a whisper. "Bertha gave me my reason to smile, and then . . ." Falling silent, he took another large gulp of beer. Harry continued to stare into his eyes as the man said, "The rain falls from the sky like an allied parachute drop . . . little water paratroopers, landing everywhere. On cars and flowers, children and their mommies . . ." After many hours, Harry finally emerged from the bar and stumbled into the cool night air, the words of the ancient warrior ringing in his intoxicated brain.

In the darkness of the early morning, a street light shown a dim yellow on a back street where the rain fell in frigid droplets onto a body which lay motionless in the gutter. Harry slowly opened an eye. Rolling on to his back, the rain made him cough as it fell into his gaping mouth. Though unaware of how he'd arrived there, Harry did his best to remove himself from the gutter. Starting with his head, he slowly raised himself to a semi-erect position. Not one to dwell on his accomplishments, he then attempted to make his way down the swirling, empty street. Tottering along, his mind echoed the words of the old man. "Just like an allied parachute drop," he thought to himself as the rain fell steadily down. "Saturation campaign," he said, "heartless brutes . . ."

Harry was then a college student, undecided as to what he wanted to make his life's work. He mulled over the possibility of becoming a minister, other times he felt politics was his true calling. At the moment, Harry was on summer vacation and wanted to be the President of the United States.

Harry liked to travel. He did so at every opportunity, financing his trips with the money he earned posing naked for art classes. Traveling about, he met a vast array of people from all walks of life. He had met winos from the park benches of Washington, D.C., to the railway stations of New Zealand. Harry had the unique talent of being able to quote these, "sages of the street," as he called them, with tremendous accuracy. He knew quotations for all occasions as a result, and was a spectacular after-dinner speaker.

One of Harry's favorite quotations was the one he picked up on a street corner in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He considered the source to be the foremost authority on women. He had once been very religious, Amish in fact. He confided this to Harry as he drank from a bottle of cough syrup which he held in a paper bag. Harry listened intently as the man spoke from beneath his dusty top hat and wiped his chin. He met with limited success in this regard, however; as drops of cough syrup rolled down his chin and onto the dirty baseball uniform which he wore with orange penny loafers. "A woman in love is like a peanut butter and jelly sandwich," he said, "but it's always Halloween when you're in love."

II

Harry, now twenty-five, was fighting traffic at the end of a hard day at the barbeque sauce factory when he heard a startling report over his car radio. The news stated that an unidentified man in what appeared to be a space suit had fallen from a merry-go-round and expired. Fearing the worst, Harry sped to the coroner's office. He wept as he identified the body of his beloved uncle.

The relationship which Harry and his uncle had shared was to the point of being spiritual. Both were outcasts of the family as well as polite society. Shocked by the suddenness of his uncle's death, Harry also wondered why he was wearing what the news report had described as a "space suit" in public. He knew quite well what it was though. It was a robe, made of a material unknown to Harry, which had been handed down through the family for generations. This unusual garment was thought to have belonged to an ancient patriarch of the family who was believed to have been a mystical priest. His uncle liked to lounge around in the attic with it on while he and Harry discussed matters of mutual interest.

Harry was not surprised that he was sole heir of his uncle's estate, but he was overwhelmed when he realized the magnitude of his inheritance. Harry quit the barbeque sauce factory and left for an extensive tour.

His mind filled with grief and wonder, Harry found solace on street corners, bars and train stations. Speaking and associating with drunkards and societal outcasts, Harry could see his uncle — and himself. Fighting desperate battles within, he was losing ground. Harry bought a one-way ticket to The Galapagos Islands.

III

Immersing himself in the dazzling refuge which this journey provided, Harry made fantastic inroads of self discovery. Colours of intense vibration moved in intricate rhythms within his mind as he explored the wonders of his awareness. Creatures hitherto unknown, revealed themselves to Harry as he traveled upon the fecund island. He experienced emotions he didn't know he was capable of, as he moved upon the rocks with awe, and pondered the boundless ocean which beckoned to him with thundering prowess.

Harry sat at the water's edge for a long time. Hearing a voice behind him, he turned around to find a woman standing a short distance away. Light danced in beacons of blinding intensity as the sun was reflected from her hair. In a voice which was soft, yet commanding, she asked if he were prepared for the initiation ceremony. Harry said nothing, and she again spoke. "To be a knight, one must first plunge far into the secret depths of the ocean. He who is ill prepared shall certainly drown in the very environment which gives him strength. Traversing the sacred regions of purple requires much, and the rewards are beyond verbalization. Are you ready to make your Knightly Vows?"

"I'll let you know . . .," said Harry, turning away.

IV

The room was well lit. Far from dismal, not very cheerful, the decor was . . . sufficient. The man who sat on the floor wore an expression which matched the room. It was as if the room was designed with him in mind. The door opened suddenly, and the man looked up to find two men dressed in suits entering. One was apparently showing the other around the facilities and this was one of their stops. The man who appeared to be the host spoke in very pleasant tones. "And this is one of our longer term residents," he said, pointing to the man on the floor. "Unusual looking outfit he has on, isn't it? He refuses to wear anything else, so we just overlook the usual hospital policy concerning patients' dress regulations. Looks something like a space man, doesn't he?" The other man nodded and smiled. "Well, I guess we'd better meet the ladies for lunch, hadn't we?" At that, the man on the floor said, "A woman in love is like a peanut butter and jelly sandwich . . . but it's always Halloween when you're in love." "Yes," said the other man, "we'd best be going if we don't want to be late." As they hurried down the hall, the host explained that the man on the floor had an emotional problem which they believed stemmed from the loss of a relative.

Behind the closed door, the man on the floor looked around the room. "Nice of them to drop by, pity they didn't stay for lunch," he said with a smile. "I suppose I'd best be on my way also. The ocean is certainly pretty from here on the shore, but I'm ready to swim in it."

The hospital staff removed Harry's corpse the following day.

David Richardson

The Five Thousand

I've taken all the flour
in the house
and baked more than
your five loaves

set my nets out
in the sea
and caught ten times
your two fish

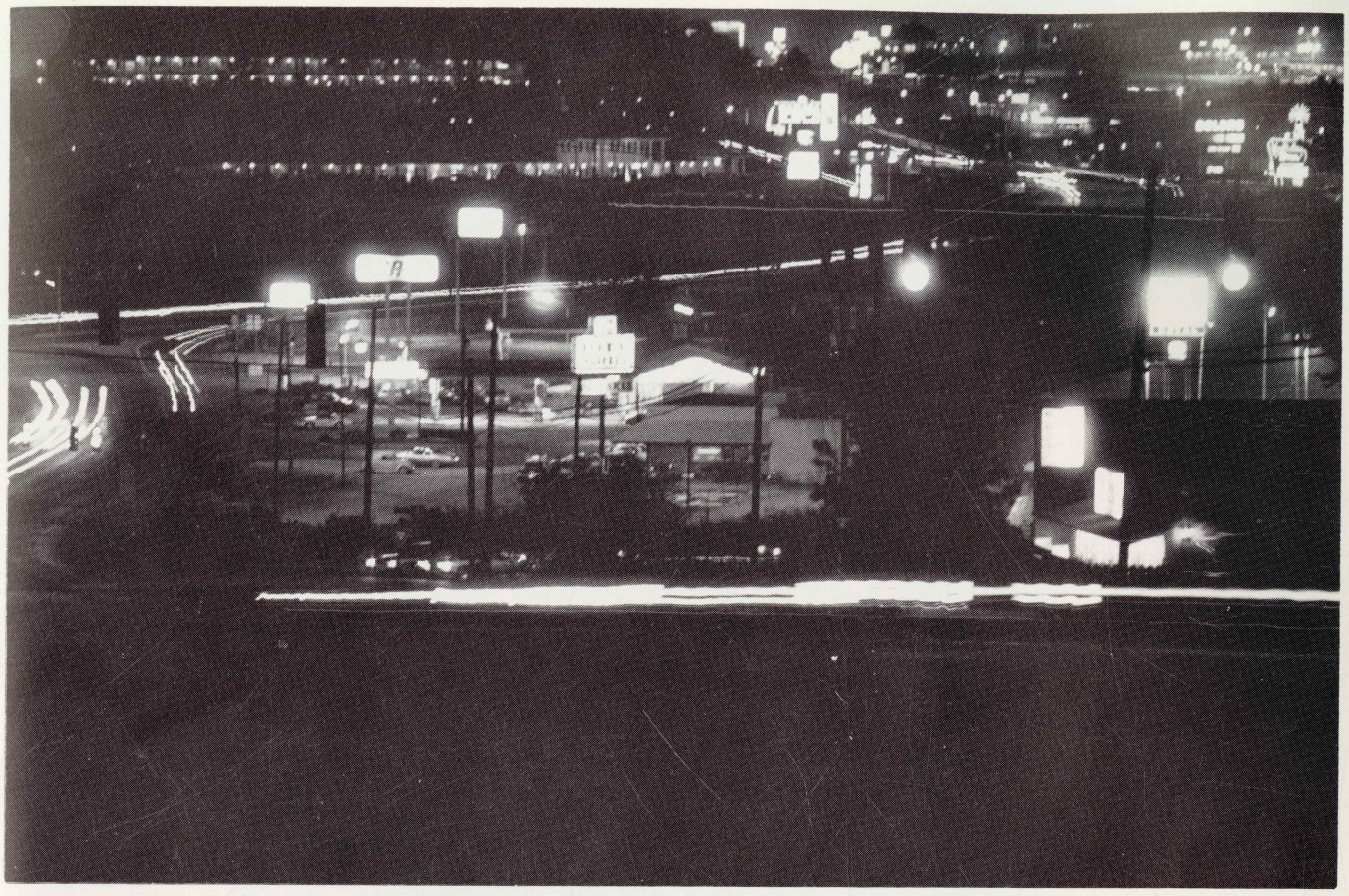
and still the hungry eyes
stare out at me
and cry for more

reveal your secrets once again
demonstrate the fine points
of miracle making
teach me to feed
the multitude.

Isabella Scavetta

Denise Beavers

Let us spend one day as deliberately as Nature.
-- Henry David Thoreau



Russell Poor

Light

Cobblestone Streets

We'd known each other for quite some time
but you had yours and I had mine
Yours was a friendly face for me to greet
Whenever I traveled those Cobblestone Streets

Seldom Sharing never Caring
I passed you by, now I know I should have tried
Hidden Faces, I've Known so long
So many mistakes show me that I've been wrong.

Foreign Faces, Familiar Places
searching, ever searching for a smile to greet
Foreign Faces, Familiar Places
As I travel, alone, those Cobblestone Streets

Once we shared and I felt something start
As a fire grows from a small, small spark
But yours came looking, and then you went away
Often to return but never to stay.

That moment we shared comes flooding back to me
like the ocean raging in from the sea
Your Knowing eyes that I saw that day
and your fleeting hugs made me turn away.

Foreign Faces, Familiar Places
searching, ever searching for a smile to greet
Foreign Faces, Familiar Places
As I travel, alone, those Cobblestone Street

It leaves a gap, that I must fill,
For again I lost mine, and like a fool, I'm searching still.

David Howard

And The Truth Shall Make You Free

It's a long way
down!

They'd told him that
After beating and robbing him
And lowering him to the
side of the cliff,

Leaving him,
With only the hopes for his wife and family,
And his basket weaving trade
and the memory of
in the city,
trying to get by.

The blood and sweat drew flies
as the day wore on
and his strength and hope
wore out.

Knowing not to look down,
but not being able to climb up
he clung to the root for his life,
. . . and prayed . . .
till he could see no more reason
and his struggle seemed . . .
vain.

He gazed toward heaven
and remembered his childhood,
He released his grip and fell
down
to the grassy bottom three feet below.

Michael Barnes

Cindy Shirley

O book, O chants! must all then amount to but this?
Must we barely arrive at this beginning of us? — and yet it is
enough, O soul;
O soul, we have positively appear'd — that is enough.

-- *Walt Whitman*